

Metaphoricity in English L2 learners' prepositions

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June 2014



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Prepositions are difficult





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

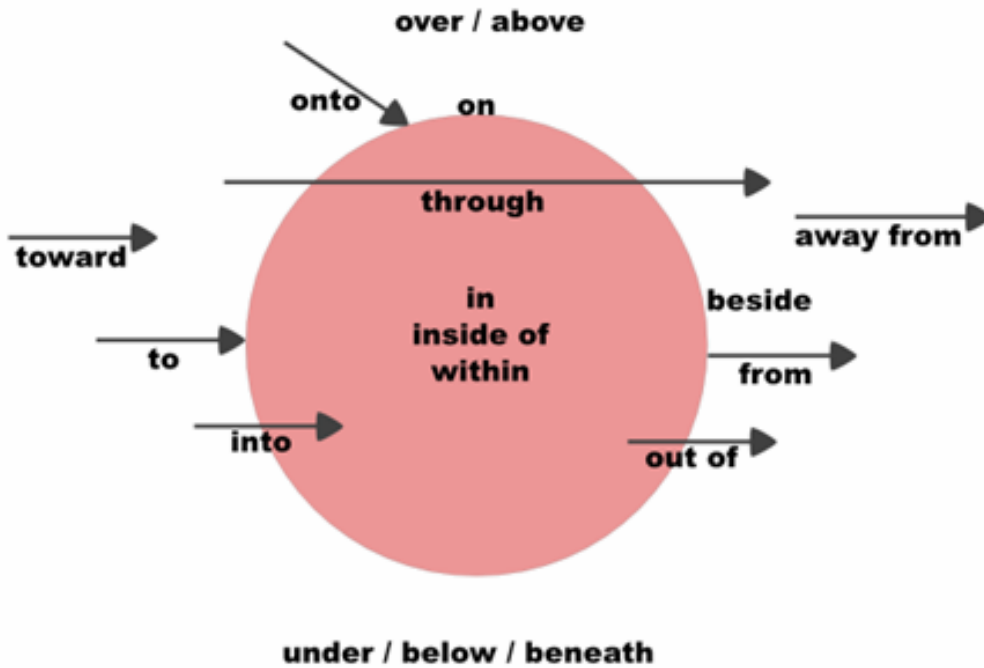
- 50 texts
- 83,675 words (learner turns)

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

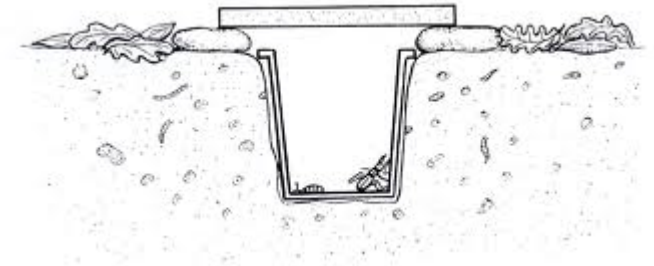
Research questions

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)*



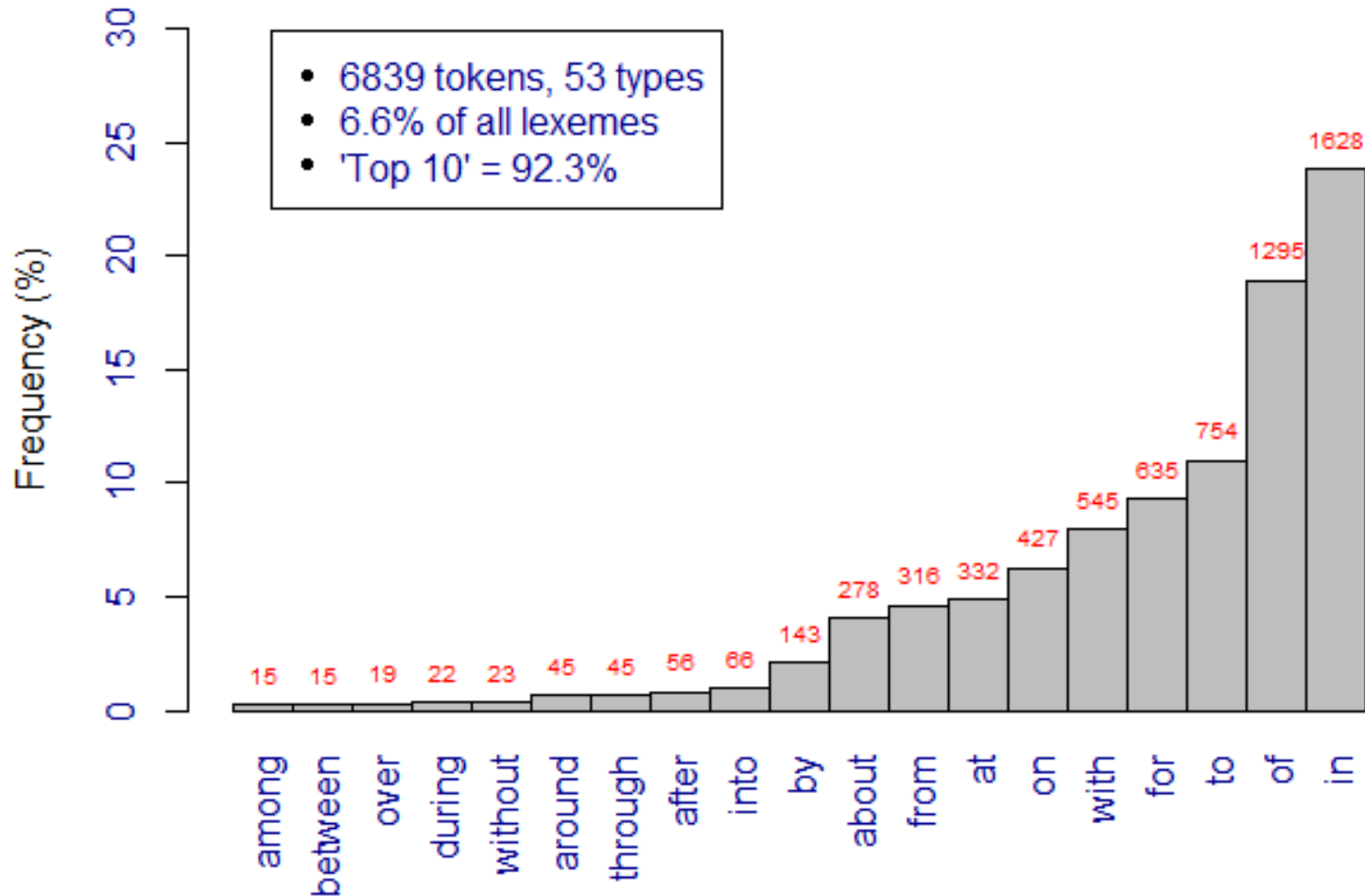
*and then (eh) there is competition **in** this level (NO006)*



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



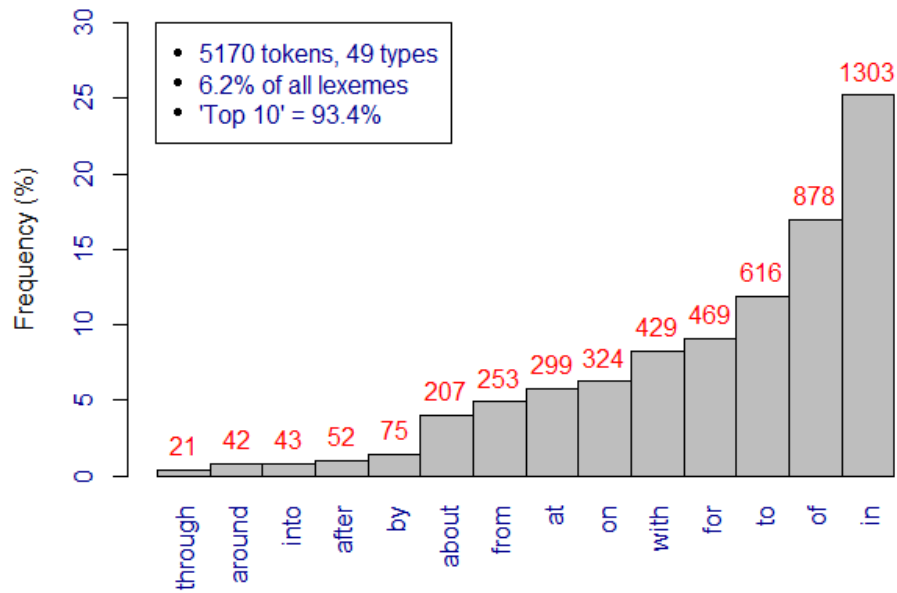
Preposition frequency NICLE & LINDSEI



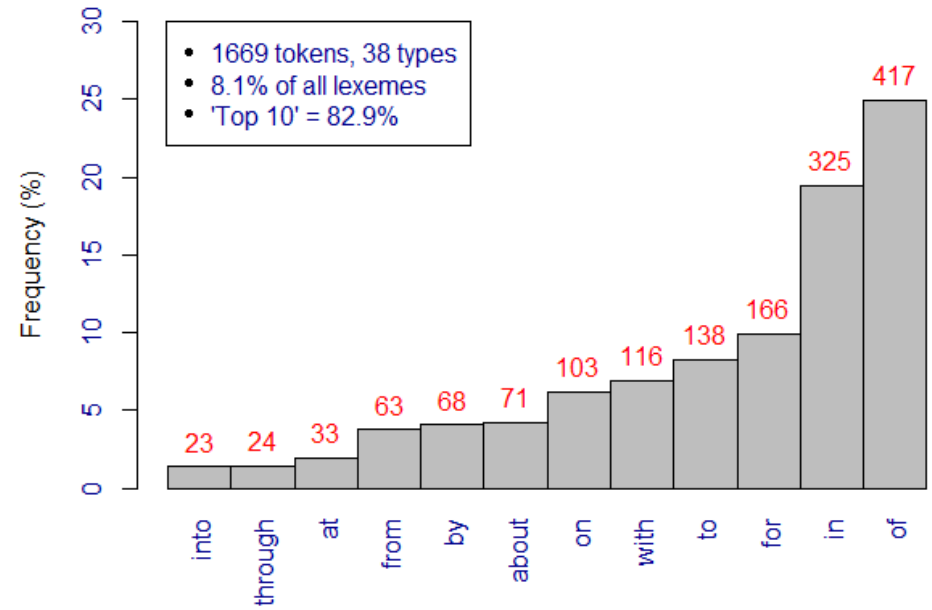
(\geq 15 occurrences)

Preposition frequency per mode

LINDSEI



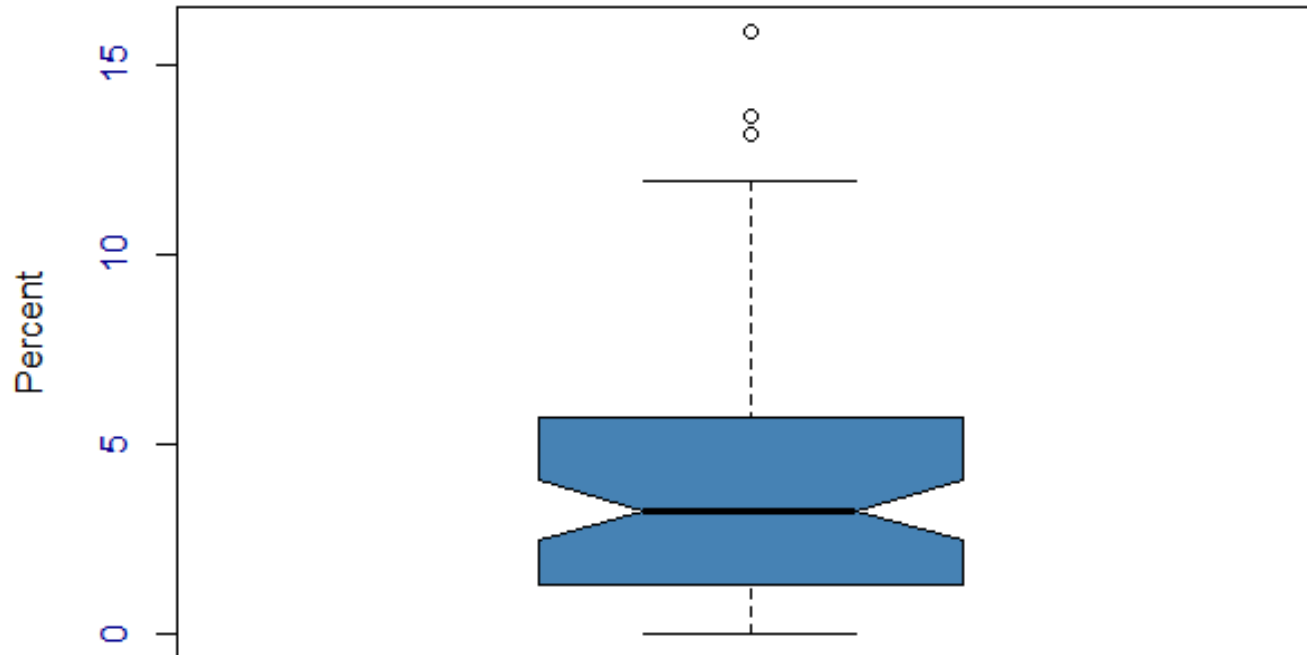
NICLE



(\geq 15 occurrences)

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

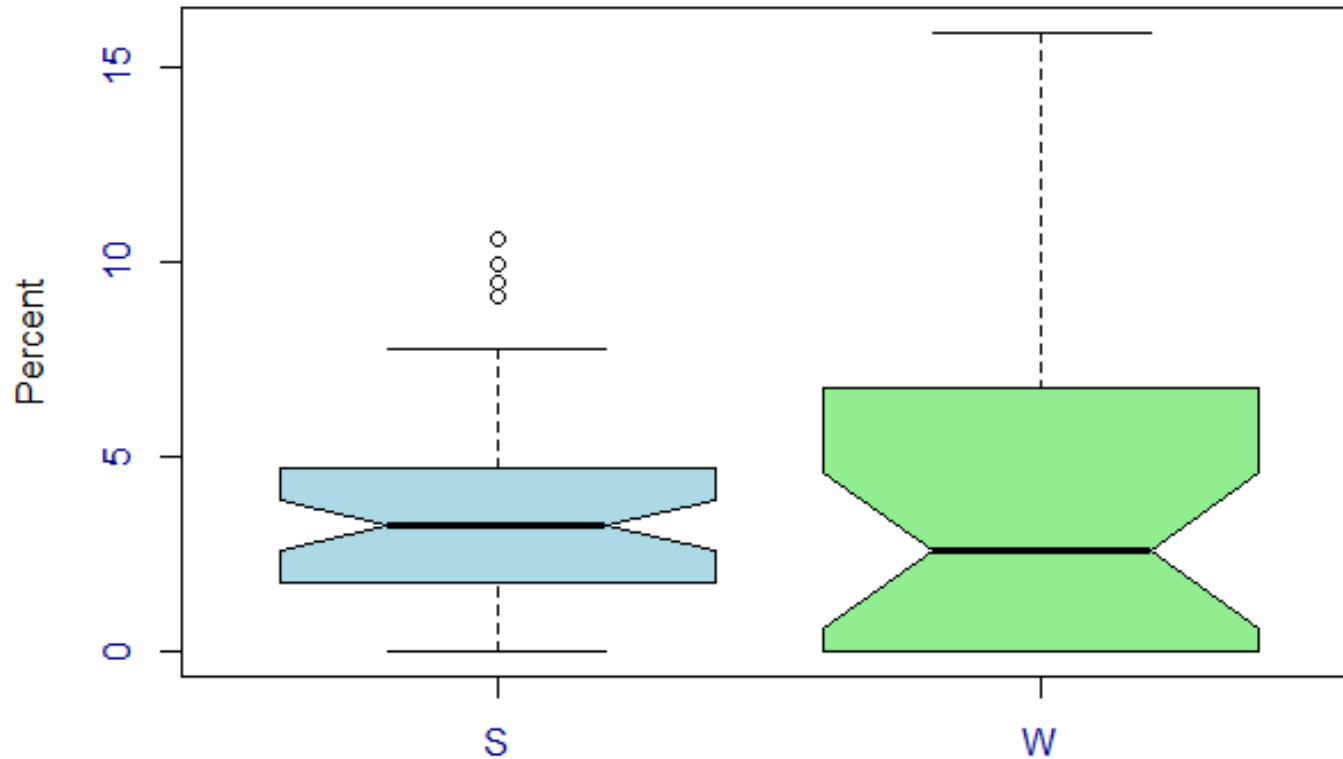
Overall divergence frequency



Median = 3.2%
Mean = 4.0%

Divergence across the modes

Overall divergence frequency per mode

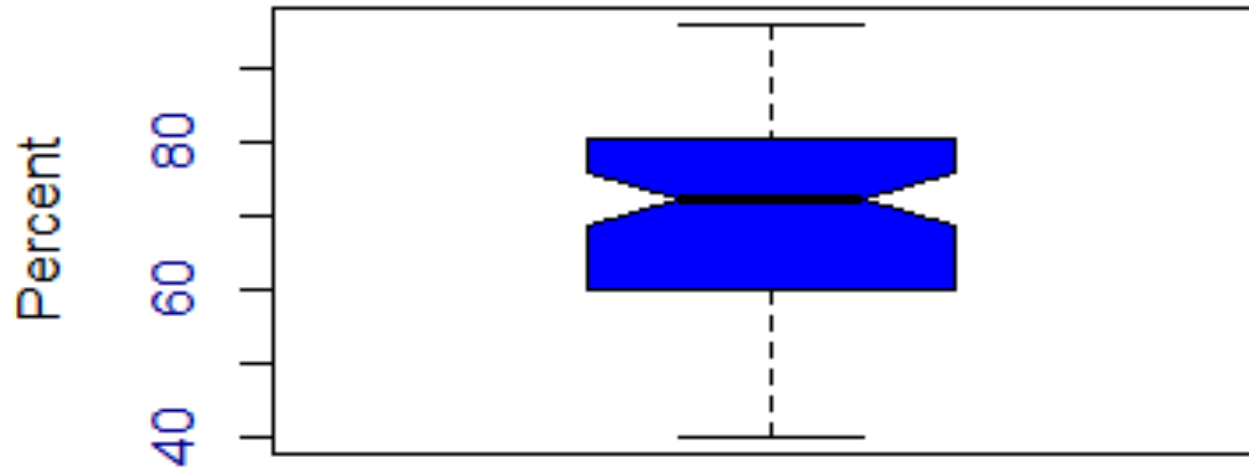


Median = 3.2%
Mean = 3.8%

Median = 2.6%
Mean = 4.4%

The most metaphorical word class...

Overall metaphor frequency

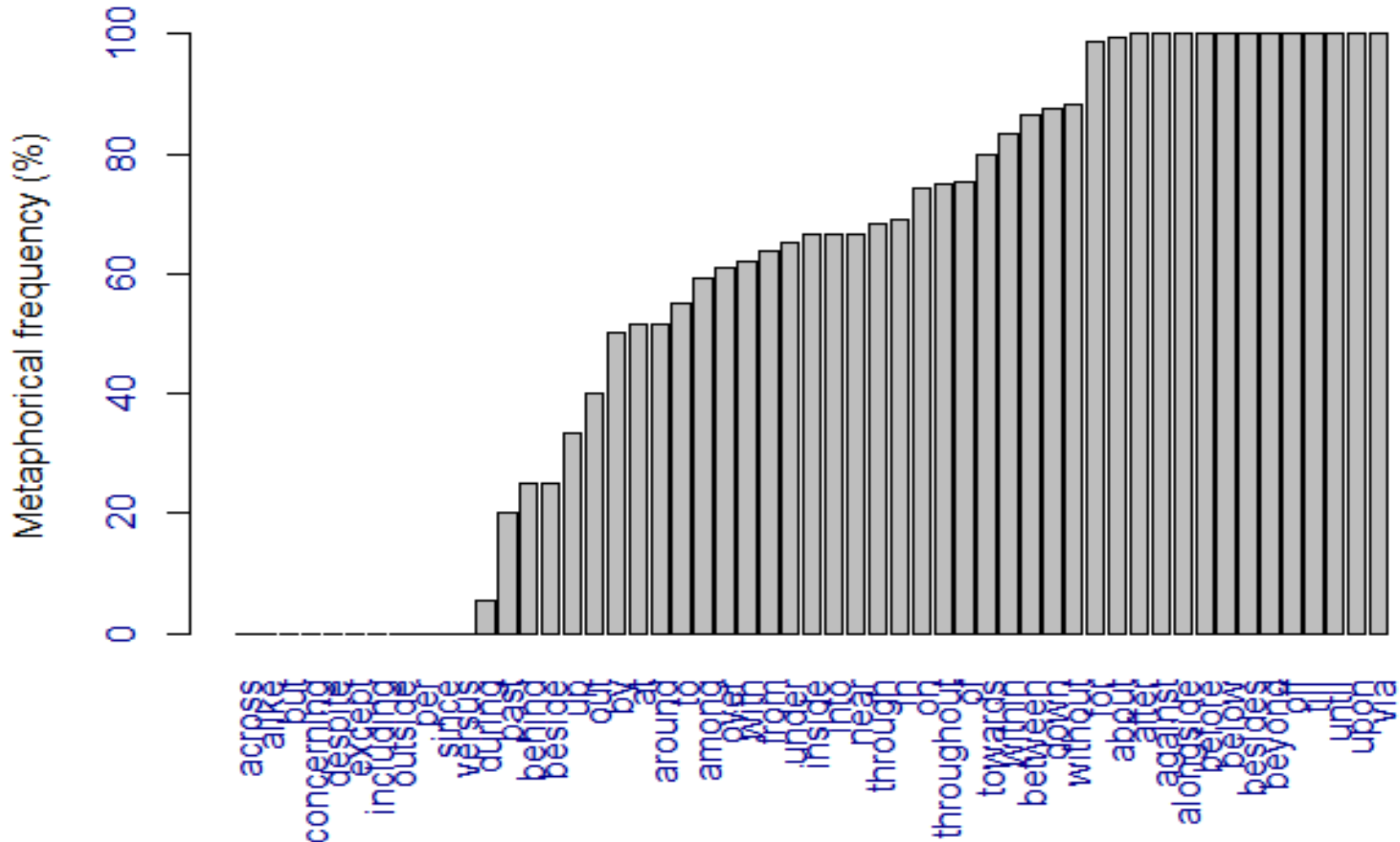


Median = 71.9%
Mean = 70.4%

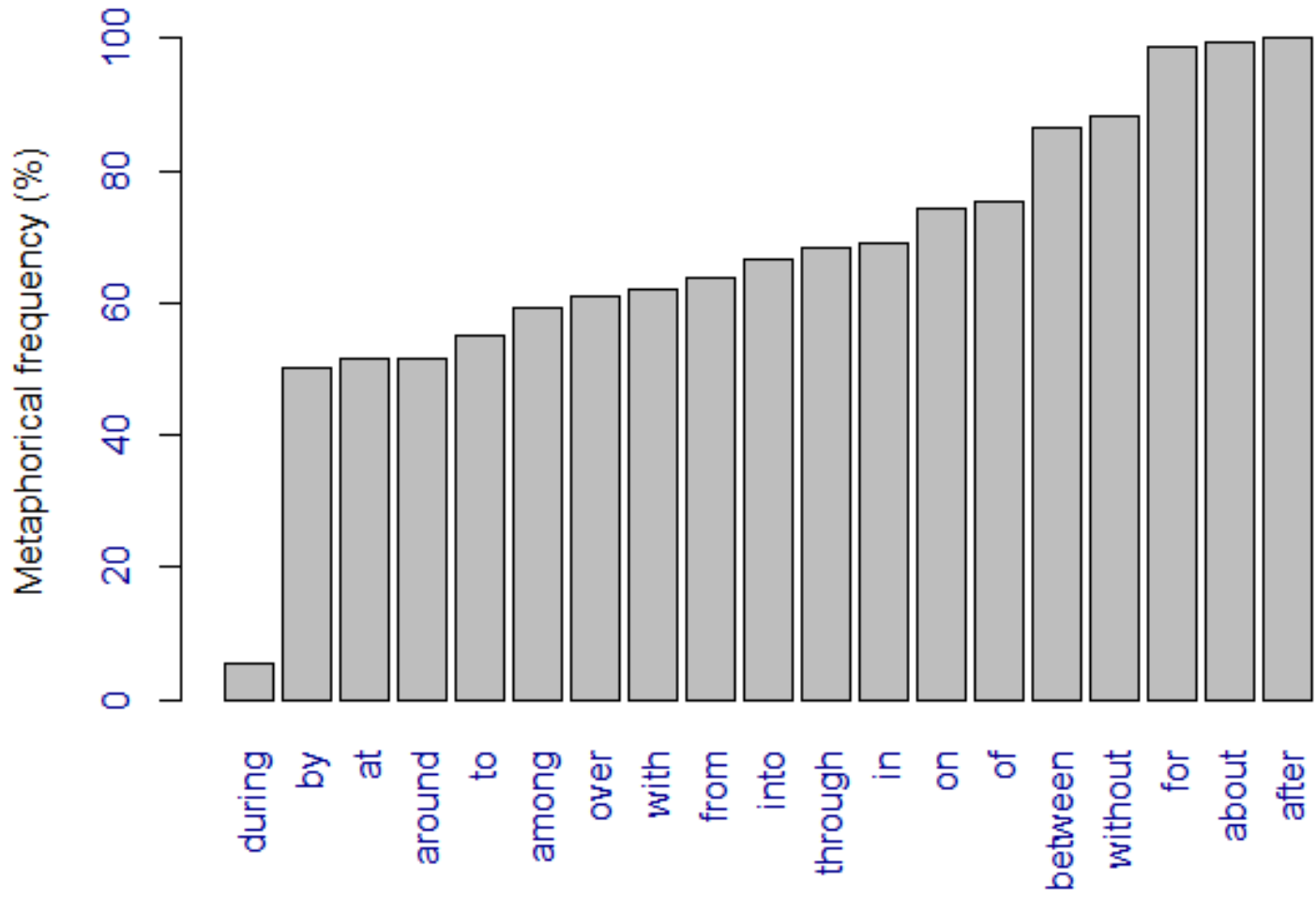
The most metaphorical word class...

...but some prepositions are more metaphorical than others

Metaphoricity per preposition



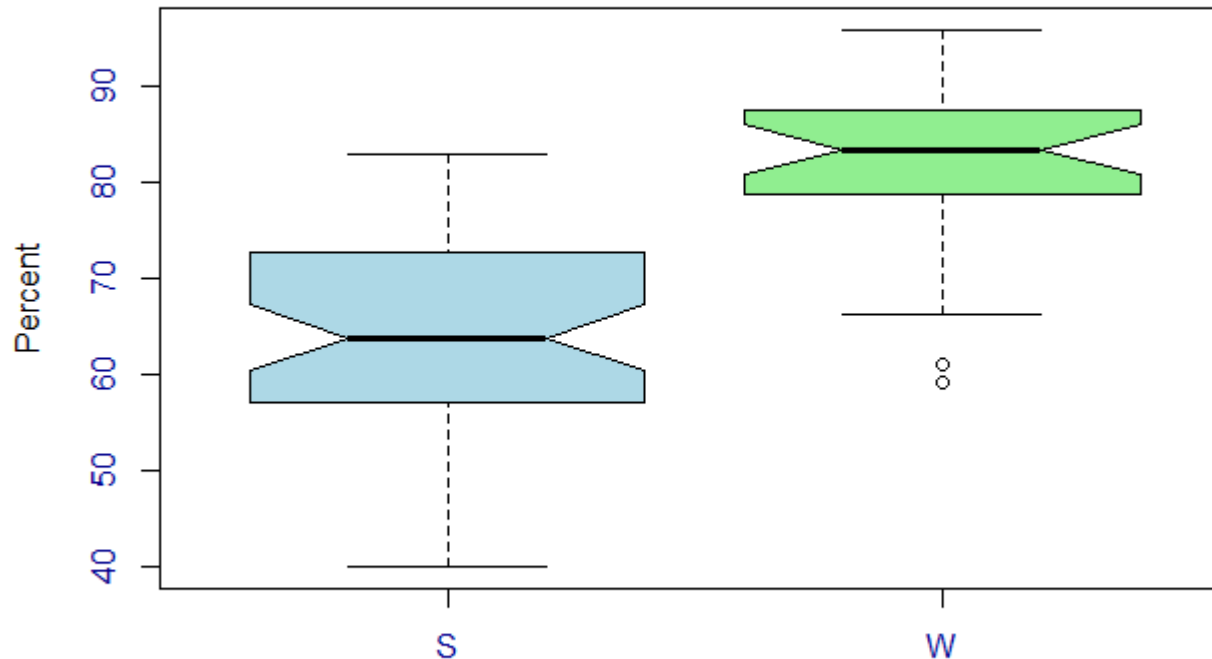
Metaphoricity per preposition



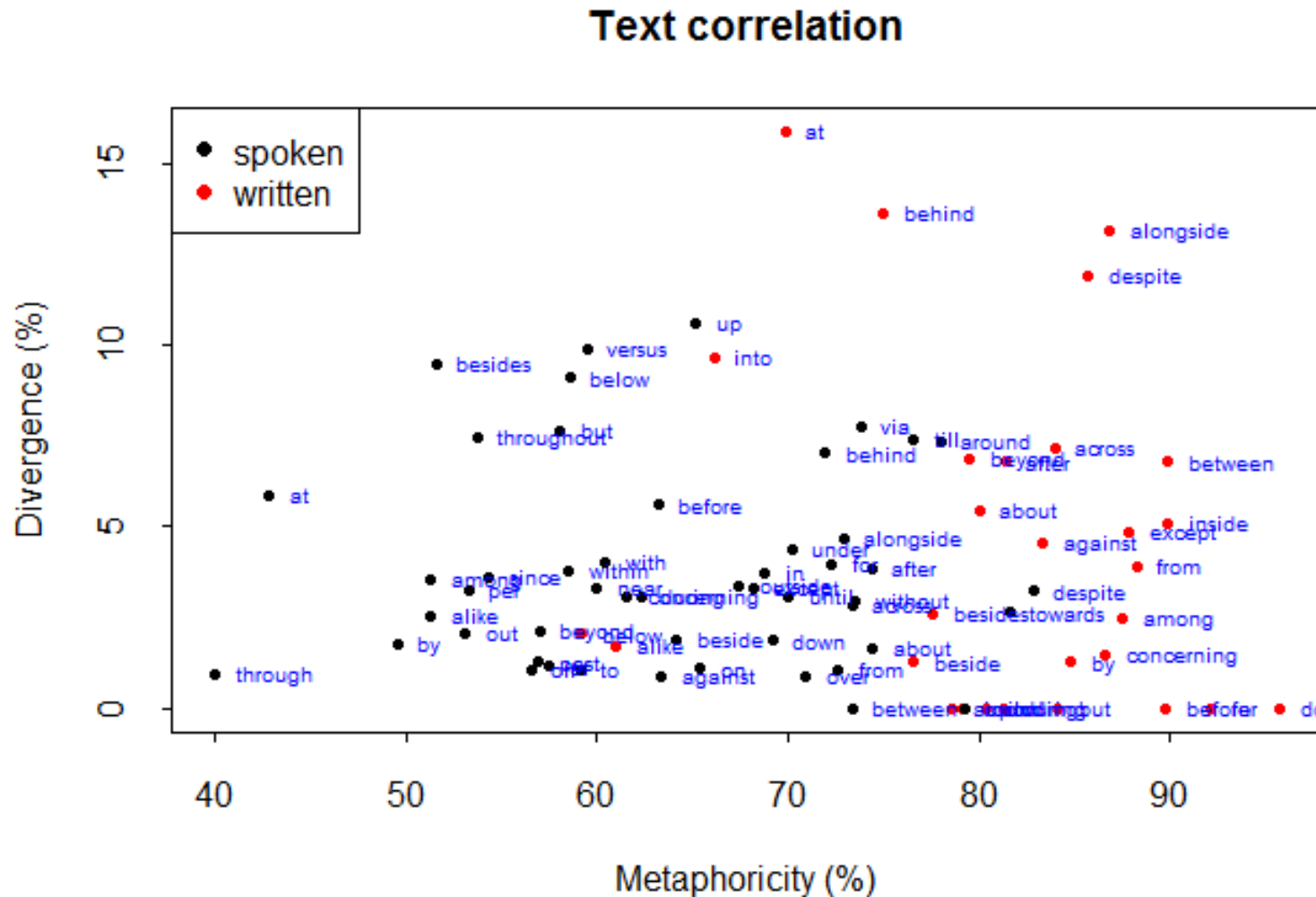
(≥ 15 occurrences)

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

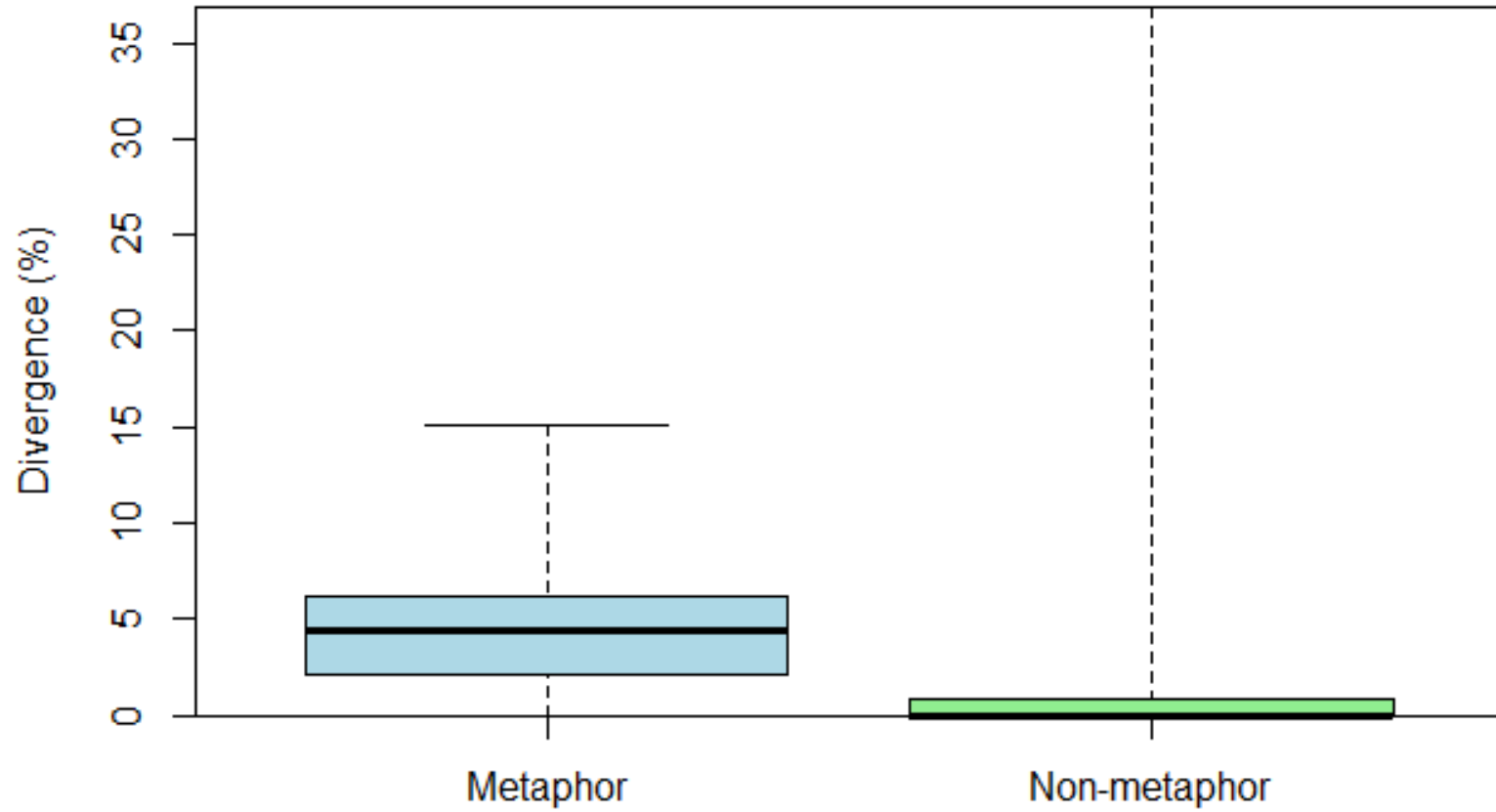
Metaphor frequency per mode



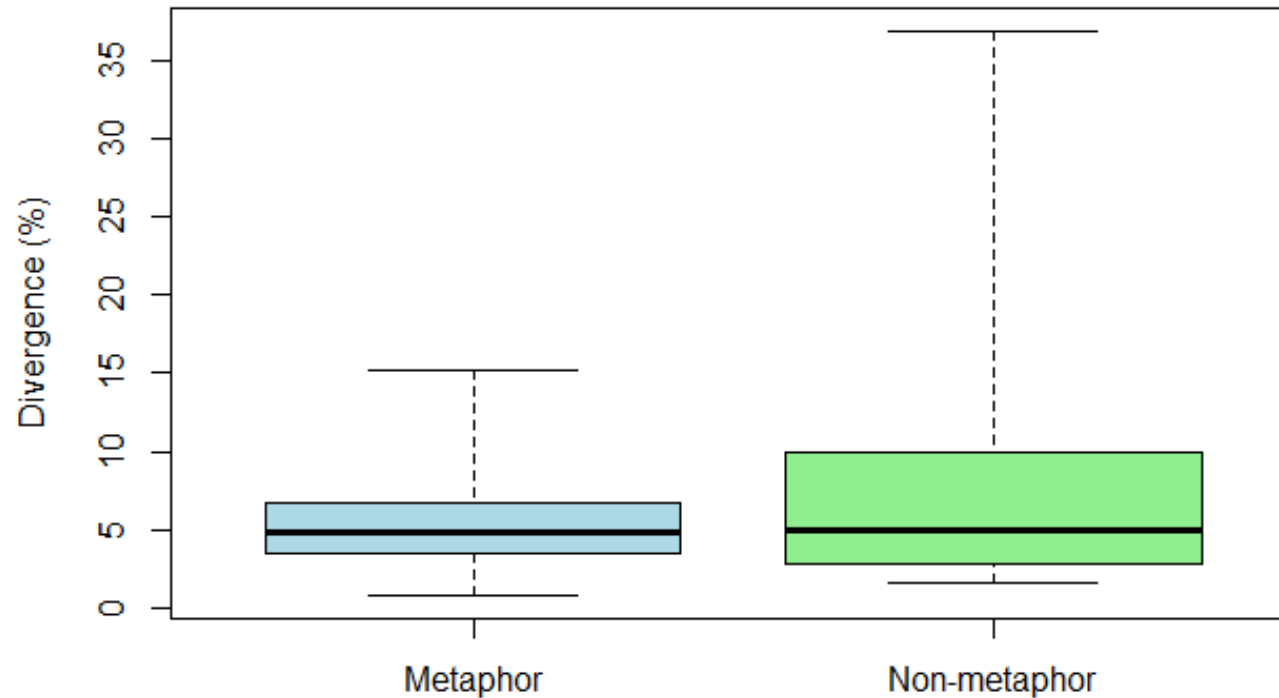
Question 3: Is there a correlation between divergent use and metaphorical use?



Observation correlation



Observation correlation



Excluding NULL observations

Concluding remarks

About metaphor:

- ✓ 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

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Corpora and tools:

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