



SELENA SEMINO

EXPERT ON APPLIED
CORPUS LINGUISTICS

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The highlights of the webinar

- Focus on the chapters on pain (chapter 2), cancer (chapter 9), and vaccines (chapter 11):
- Pain
 - The McGill Pain Questionnaire – a self-reporting tool for patients used for assessing pain quality – the validity questioned due to concerns about descriptor comprehensibility among patients.
 - The word “pain” studied in relation to the frequency of occurrence in the corpora and collocations associated with the pain intensity.
- Cancer
 - The impact of violence metaphors such as “to fight/to lose the battle” on feelings of dis/empowerment presented as “my battle against cancer” (enemy) or “my cancer journey” (hard road) was analysed.
- Vaccines
 - The MMR vaccine Twitter corpus is a compilation of tweets in which both “MMR vaccine” and “covid”/“covid vaccine” are mentioned together in contrast: MMR vaccine (effective) vs covid vaccine (non-effective).

February 2026

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Take-away

- Pain
 - Findings revealed that “the choice of descriptor is explicable largely or entirely in terms of strength of the collocation link from the word “pain” to that descriptor”.
- Cancer
 - NHS policy has shifted to describing cancer as a journey.
 - Recommended read on military metaphors: “Illness as Metaphor” by Susan Sontag (1979).
 - A “[Metaphor Menu](#) – a downloadable PDF leaflet offering a collection of metaphors to describe one’s cancer experience. It is already available in Spanish and Italian, with more languages on the way.
- Vaccines
 - The covid vaccine is commonly used in collocations with “shot” or “jab” (similarly to the flu vaccine), emphasizing the contrast that it is not a “real” (“proper”) vaccine like the MMR vaccine.

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