



**Joint talk by two  
international visitors from the  
Centre for Corpus  
Approaches to Social Science**

**When**

Friday, 24 February  
4:00-5:30 pm AEDT

**Where**

Quad Seminar Rm S204  
(Oriental Room),  
The University of Sydney  
Zoom ([link](#))

**More information**

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This event in the Sydney SFL  
research seminar series is  
presented by the Sydney  
Corpus Lab.

To find out more, visit

<https://sydneycorpuslab.com>

**'You said, we did': Analysing marketising discourse in UK  
healthcare websites**

Gavin Brookes, Lancaster University, UK

In this talk, I present findings from two projects exploring the role of discourse as a social practice in the process of healthcare marketisation. Over the last forty or so years, the UK's state-funded healthcare system has been increasingly subjected to market forces. A corollary of this process is that the UK National Health System is now widely acknowledged to operate, now more than any time in its history (dating back to 1948), to be governed and thus operate according to market principles. In this paper, I examine the marketising discourse present in the websites of local healthcare providers throughout England. Adopting a broadly systematic functional linguistic approach, I adopt quantitative and qualitative perspectives on this issue. First, I present a corpus-based transitivity analysis of healthcare providers' self-presentation. The processes and values self-attributed in this context are argued to contribute to the construction of distinct healthcare brands, as well as to position patients as healthcare consumers within a neoliberal model of personal health responsibility. Second, I employ multimodal critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how the discourses contributing to such representations manifest not only at the level of language but also through imagery featured in the websites. I conclude the talk by questioning, critically, the extent to which the social changes that are refracted in (but also supported by) these discourses accords with the NHS's founding principle of providing free healthcare to all at the point of use.

**Investigating 'the science' in UK news coverage of the Covid-19  
pandemic**

Luke Collins, Lancaster University, UK

This study concerns the representation of 'the science' in the UK news media, with a particular focus on how it is reported to operate in relation to policymaking. Governments around the world have established and relied upon scientific advisory boards to process and report evidence relating to Covid-19 and to provide recommendations for national policy. This highlights the epistemic authority given to representatives of 'the science' when it comes to national health interventions. I apply a transitivity analysis to 564 references to 'the science' that were identified from 2020 in the UK section of the News on the Web (NOW) corpus to investigate how the outputs and processes of scientific inquiry were presented to the public. Documenting the various participant roles occupied by 'the science' and the associated processes cited around the term, I consider how its discursive representation could inform the public's understanding and valuation of 'the science' as evidence driving government policy. Observations show that journalists have challenged monolithic representations of 'the science' and that representatives of, and procedures involved in, scientific inquiry are frequently positioned as peripheral or enacted upon by more agentive participants, such as government ministers. Furthermore, although 'the science' is a direct and active participant in verbal processes ('saying' and 'telling' others what to do) and material processes ('leading' and 'guiding' the government), journalists frequently use relational processes to raise questions as to the definition and classification of 'the science' (e.g. "the science is actually the opinions of scientific advisors").