

Metaphorical Mapping across Text Genres. Domain-specific variation in the conceptualization of TIME in Medieval Latin

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A number of studies have shown that in a large majority of languages the concept of TIME is systematically comprehended in metaphorical terms (Evans 2013). Now, the metaphorical mapping is all but immune to diachronic, cultural, and genre variation (Kövecses 2007). This is valid for Latin as well in which the conceptualization of TIME would significantly change with the advent of Christianity, the exception being spatial metaphors that are crucial for its understanding.

In two case studies that are a follow-up to our previous research (Nowak 2019) we examine the domain-specific variation of the TIME metaphors in Medieval Latin, a language that was extensively used in Europe from the 7th to mid-16th century. To that aim the occurrences of the Lat. *tempus* ‘time’ were retrieved from two Latin corpora: (1) a large (ca. 100M tokens) corpus of mainly theological texts from the 2nd-13th centuries and (2) a small (ca. 3M tokens) corpus of texts written in the Polish Kingdom from the 11th to the 16th century.

In the first study, separate collocation candidates lists were computed for each of the text genres represented in both corpora. The collocates of the node word were next clustered using a distributional semantics model (Baroni & Lenci 2010) built from both text collections. In the second study, separate distributional semantic models (DSMs) were built from the texts belonging to each of the topical domains represented in the larger corpus. The DSMs were next employed to retrieve lists of similar terms of the node word in each subcorpus.

The analysis, first, confirmed that the sense of the term *tempus* and, consequently, the nature of temporal reference differs with regard to the text domain. For example, in the historiography, *tempus* is predominantly used to fix events to some particular moment, while in charters it would usually evoke the inexorable passage of time. Second, our study also clearly shows that in some of the genres the concept of TIME is subject to more intensive and varied metaphorical elaboration than in the others.

At the same time, some serious methodological issues emerged that need to be addressed if distributional semantics models are to become a tool of fine-grained study of lexical meaning. One of the crucial problems seems to be the quality of the DSMs built from small historical corpora as it has direct impact on the validity of the research conclusions one may draw.

References: Baroni, M. & A. Lenci (2010). Distributional Memory: A General Framework for Corpus-based Semantics. *Computational Linguistics* 36, 673–721. Evans, V. (2013). *Language and time: a cognitive linguistics approach*. CUP: Cambridge. Kövecses, Z. (2007). *Metaphor in culture: universality and variation*, CUP: Cambridge. Nowak, K. (2019). *Tempus mutatur: Analysing collocations of tempus ‘time’ with distributional semantic models*. In: *Lemmata Linguistica Latina. Volume I: Words and Sounds*, eds. Holmes, N., Ottink, M., Schrickx, J., & M. Selig, 69–85, DeGruyter: Berlin.

