

Theoretical and technical challenges of developing Plutarchean Corpus of Conceptual Metaphor of Mind

Katarzyna Kuś, Bartosz Maćkiewicz, Orestis Karatzoglou, Laurens van der Wiel,
Angelina Gerus & Julia Doroszewska
(University of Warsaw)

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Typically, metaphor research in classics focuses on the analysis of *selected* passages containing metaphorical content (e.g., Cairns 2016, Doroszewska 2019, Kazantzidis 2017, Short 2013). The standard method of analysis generally involves some form of literary close reading performed by a researcher on a limited volume of texts. In contrast, research projects concerning contemporary languages often try to use much larger corpora of texts and switch between traditional literary analysis methods and quantitative approaches, such as the statistical analysis of frequency metrics of metaphors (e.g. Deignan 1999, Petrucci 2016, Zawisławska 2019). One problem that precludes classics researchers from broadening their methodology is the lack of structured data suitable for more complex qualitative analyses. Structured data suitable for training and testing the models is also a prerequisite for application of formal and computational methods of metaphor identification (Steen et al. 2010).

In the talk, we will present our ongoing work on the Plutarchean Corpus of Metaphors of Mind. We will critically analyse technical and theoretical challenges posed by the task of creating a corpus of metaphors in historical literary texts in ancient Greek. We will show that contemporary variants of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Kövecses, 2015, Semino, 2008, Gibbs, and Colston 2012), while theoretically illuminating, are not suitable in practice for coding metaphors in rich, literary works such as Plutarch's. On the one hand, the clear-cut hierarchy of levels of metaphors provided by standard accounts of CMT fail to capture interleaving and complex metaphors that are present in Plutarch's work. On the other hand, using standard variants of CMT as a coding framework introduces arbitrariness on the part of the analyst, who is required to make discretionary decisions on proper conceptualization of metaphorical content. These can heavily affect the validity of subsequent analyses, and thus should be limited by using a less rigid theoretical framework.

As a solution to these challenges, we propose a two-level theoretical framework of conceptual metaphor. We will show how it achieves the flexibility required to properly capture the structure of metaphorical content in Plutarch's works without sacrificing precision and usefulness for future analyses. This framework was also used to create interactive computer-based tools that can serve for both statistical and qualitative exploration of metaphors in Plutarch's works by analysts who are not experts in quantitative methodology and working with structured digital data.

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