Correlation between the gradability of Latin adjectives and the ability to form qualitative abstract nouns

Lucie Pultrová (Charles University Prague)

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adjectives with attested both comparative and superlative   3 %

Scalar classification of adjectives

- for Czech: Lehečková (2011)

non-restrictive	restrictive				
current, future, said…	absolute				relative
	relational	scalar – complementary		neutral	scalar – polar
		maximal	minimal		
	wooden / metal / glass table	*full, empty, clean*	*dangerous, dirty*	*5 km long way*	*long – short way*

Problematic nature of the Latin corpus

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- literary Latin – extremely conservative (most of the authors emulating Cicero's style)

x

- colloquial Latin – progressive

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➡️ to find **elements** that **correlate with gradability/non-gradability** and that are **directly discernible at the level of written text**

Latin abstract nouns

- *-tudo* (type *magnitudo < magnus*)

- *-tas* (type *caritas < carus*)

- *-ia* (type *clementia < clemens*)

- *-itia* (type *iustitia < iustus*)

Correlation abstract nouns – gradability

suffix	number of abstract nouns	number of the attestedly gradable corresponding base adjectives	percentage
-itia	31	31	**100%**
-tudo	87	82	**94%**
-ia	168 (63 -ia, 105 -ntia)	136 (55 -ia, 81 -ntia)	**81%** (**87%** -ia, **77%** -ntia)
-tas	434	334	**77%**

Low frequency

perperus (1)
blandiloquens (1)
breviloquens (1)
displicens (6)
fragrans (10)
graveolens (7)
incogitans (3)
inconsequens (10)
suaviloquens (6) and others

Low frequency / semantics

canus 'white, whitened' (absolute/ relational adjective)

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- the superlative forms of adjectives (*maximitas*, *supremitas* etc.)

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