

#PARAPHRASE

#PARAPHRASE denotes, in the understanding of the Oxford English dictionary, a “rewording of something written or spoken by someone else, esp. with the aim of making the sense clearer”. As such it is a practice of discussing, transforming or even conceptually translating an idea or concept across media such as language and writing, music or, at times, art, with the latter “elaborating on a well-known tune” or visual motive.*

While the term itself remains deeply rooted in the humanities so far, the associated challenge fits well with digital humanities: “The process of paraphrasing can be intended by an author, however the phenomenon is highly dependent on the interpretation of the hearer/reader – if he/she does not detect the similarity and relate the posttext to a pretext, it stays a ‘phrase’ instead of a ‘paraphrase’. The phenomenon is therefore accidental (in the philosophical sense)” (Digital Plato).

In consequence, the detection of paraphrases is part of the complex sphere of intertextuality – the way in which texts within and beyond a specific #CORPUS relate to each other – and addresses the sphere between #SIMILARITY and #UNCERTAINTY.

* “paraphrase, n”. in: *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, Third Edition, June 2005; most recently modified version published online March 2022, <https://www.oed.com/> [25.10.2022].

Title: “Digital Plato – Tradition and Reception”

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Advisory Board: Jonas Grethlein (University of Heidelberg, Department of Classical Philology), John Nerbonne (University of Groningen, Department of Computational Linguistics), and Manfred Pinkal (University of Saarland, Department of Computational Linguistics)

Corpus: The whole of Ancient Greek literature (TLG-E)

Field of Study: Intertextuality, (Classical) Receptions Studies, Natural Language Processing, Paraphrase Extraction / Paraphrase Search

Institution: Universities of Dresden, Halle, Leipzig, and Waseda University Tokio

Methods: Hermeneutics, word embedding, neural networks, close and distant reading, visualisation, web development

Tools: Paraphrase search via rWMD / via n-grams, Reference-Annotator, URN-generator

Technology: Word Mover’s Distance, word2vec, complex n-grams, lemmatization, Ruby, Ruby-on-Rails, Python, JavaScript