"Latin authority and constructional transparency at work: neologisms in the French medical vocabulary of the Middle Ages and their fate"

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Abstract
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Latin authority and constructional transparency at work: neologisms in the French medical vocabulary of the Middle Ages and their fate
Research project KU Leuven OT/14/47.
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**Research question**
- Why do certain French medical neologisms created in the course of the Middle Ages manage to survive, while others disappear after some time?

**Hypothesis**
- Next to external factors involving authors and texts, morphological criteria of the terminology play an important role in its preservation.

**Theoretical framework**
- Construction Morphology (CM; Booij 2010) is suitable to formalize the morphological relations between the different attested neologisms.

**Corpus**
- 24 French medieval medical texts, both translations from Latin and texts directly written in French, from which medical terms and word families will be extracted.

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**Analysis of each term**

**External factors**
- success of the text
- prestige of the author
- use of glosses
- constancy of use by author/translator
- fate (MA > Modern French)

**Internal factors**
- source word
- type of neologism
- meanings throughout time of the loanword/stem/affix
- field of medieval medicine
- morphological analysis: simple/complex word
- allomorphy of the stem/affix
- size of the word: number of syllables
- "distance" of the stem/affix with respect to the source-term: number of different phonemes
- type frequency vs token frequency of the word/stem/affix
- embedding in a morphological family (yes/no)
- "cumulated" frequency of the stem
- size of the morphological family

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**Cross-analysis**

multivariate statistical analyses (regression analyses)
- isolate the criteria / combinations of external or internal criteria that are most significant for the success of the term

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**Results**

It is to be expected that the most prominent criteria, which play a role in the survival of medical neologisms throughout the Middle Ages up to Modern French, will emerge.