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Digital thesauri as semantic treasure troves: a Linguistic Linked Data approach to "A Thesaurus of Old English"

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Digital Thesauri as Semantic Treasure Troves

“Change, alter, or perhaps transform?” Selecting the perfect word for a specific context, such as when composing a report or a speech, is all the easier with a thesaurus at hand. These lexicographic resources are invaluable for looking up alternative words or phrases that convey a specific meaning. In addition, thesauri offer a number of uses beyond looking up alternative phrasings: they are veritable treasure troves for cultural, linguistic, anthropological, and literary-critical research — especially when these resources are arranged in a topical fashion, a hierarchical ordering of its groups of loosely synonymous words according to their meaning.

This doctoral dissertation investigates how Web-based dissemination of historical language thesauri can be improved to facilitate academic explorations of language and culture. The investigation includes a case study of *A Thesaurus of Old English*, expressing it in a Linguistic Linked Data form and making it available through the web application Evoke, newly developed by the author of this dissertation. A number of researchers, taking part in the research project Exploring Early Medieval Eloquence, have engaged with these two digital resources and show that thesauri are by no means exhausted by previous investigations. The results demonstrate that both the new dissemination form and the innovative functionalities provided by the web application can offer novel ways in which to explore and analyse thesaurus content of this early medieval variant of the English language.

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A LINGUISTIC LINKED DATA APPROACH TO
A THESAURUS OF OLD ENGLISH



Digital Thesauri as Semantic Treasure Troves S. STOLK

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