Thinking and Modelling Spatio-Temporality across Languages

WM Fellowship Event
Language & Space in Public Imagination

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Spatial & Temporal Language

- Deictic pronouns 'this' and 'that', 'here' and 'there', 'now' and 'then'
- Verb Tenses
- Giving directions
- Mongolian: *Hiimor'* & *hiimortoi* (Benard Charlier, 2012)

Translator's Nightmare

Puzzled, I picked up the bag. It was stuffed with crunchy nylon leaves. I read the back: "ShifTbush™ Fall Mix, a blend of 3-D, photo-enhanced, synthetic forest leaves. Apply it using EZStick™ to your existing camo and you'll be instantly invisible in your woodland surroundings, even to the keenest of animals. ShifTbush™ is the accomplished hunter's dream."

Marisha Pessl, *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*

Text is not a Map

Different media can be mixed, and various forms of crossover and hybrid works push against and question media differences, but the borders are still there. They are strongly connected to the different sign systems used in visual and verbal expressions.

Øyvind Eide (2016)

Neuroanatomical Boundaries

- Some, even as early as Descartes, have argued that language is necessary for conscious thought (Descartes, 1637/1988, 1649/1970) and because the left hemisphere is usually dominant for language it could be viewed as more important for consciousness than the right. However, clearly non-verbal thoughts can still generate conscious experiences (Devinsky, 2000). Therefore, language might best be viewed as an important component of the content of consciousness (along with other specific functions such as visual perception, mathematical ability, judgment of distance, and so on), rather than as a necessary regulator of the overall level of consciousness.

Hal Blumenfeld (2016, p. 18)

Between Verbal & Spatial

- Signs may offer straightforward tokens of shape, location or direction linked to an object or an activity.
- Related to this MacSweeney, Capek, Campbell, and Woll (2008) in their review on the neurobiology of sign language also discuss a variety of evidence indicating extended right hemisphere involvement when processing spatial language expressions in signed language.

(Struiksma & Postma, 2017)

Text as Experience

- Hans-Georg Gadamer: "We are 'in' the world through being 'in' language" (Jeff Malpas, 2018)

- 'Thick Description' (Clifford Geertz, 1973) → Thick Reading | Thick Computing

DRaL
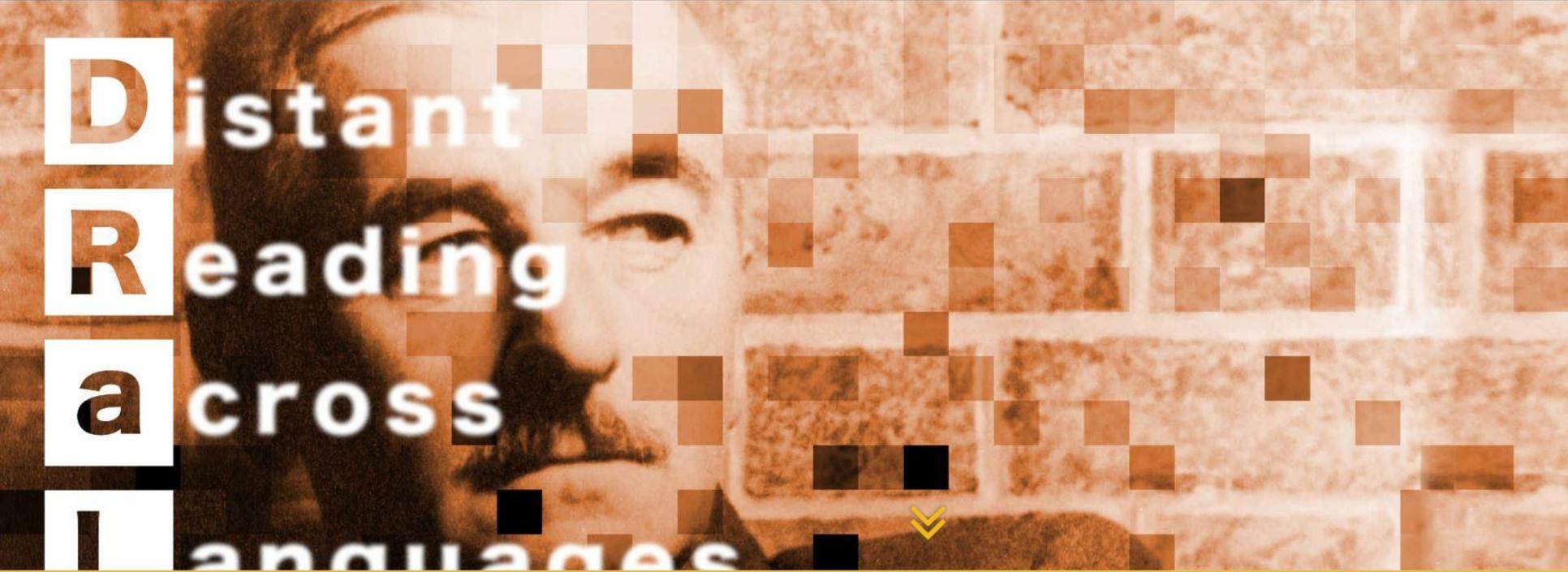
Distant Reading across Languages

Visualisation | Distant | Translation | Modelling | Reading

2018-19

Supported by the Department of Digital Humanities (DDH) at King's College London, Distant Reading across Languages (DRaL) is a collaborative project between DDH and KDL with a interdisciplinary

Spatio-Temporal Patterns in Translation

Distribution of 'fire' equivalents in Russian, Lithuanian & Polish2 versions

огонь, плита

ugnis, liepsna,
židinys,orkaitė,
jos_ugnis,
jos_liepsna

ogień, kominek,
popielnik
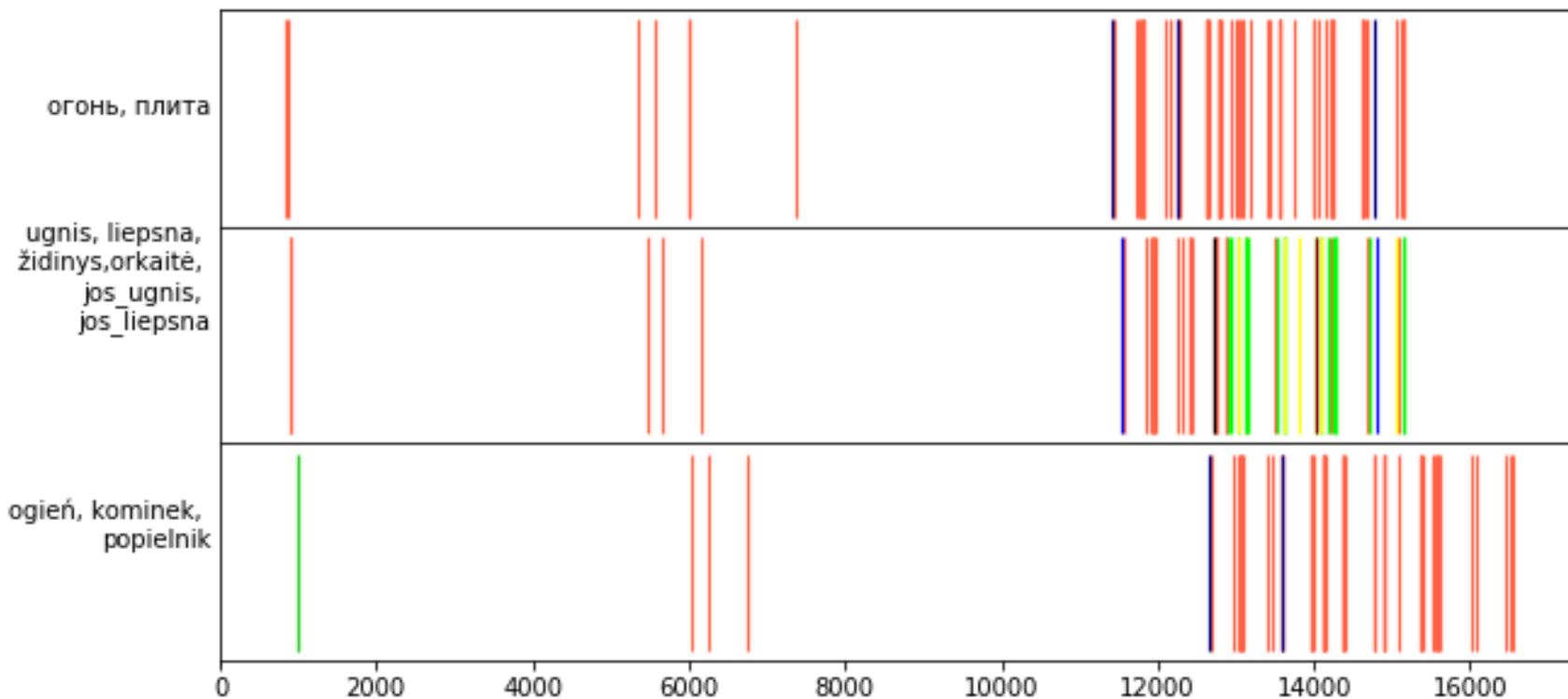
Visual Ethnography of Spaces in Translation
https://skfb.ly/6KYys
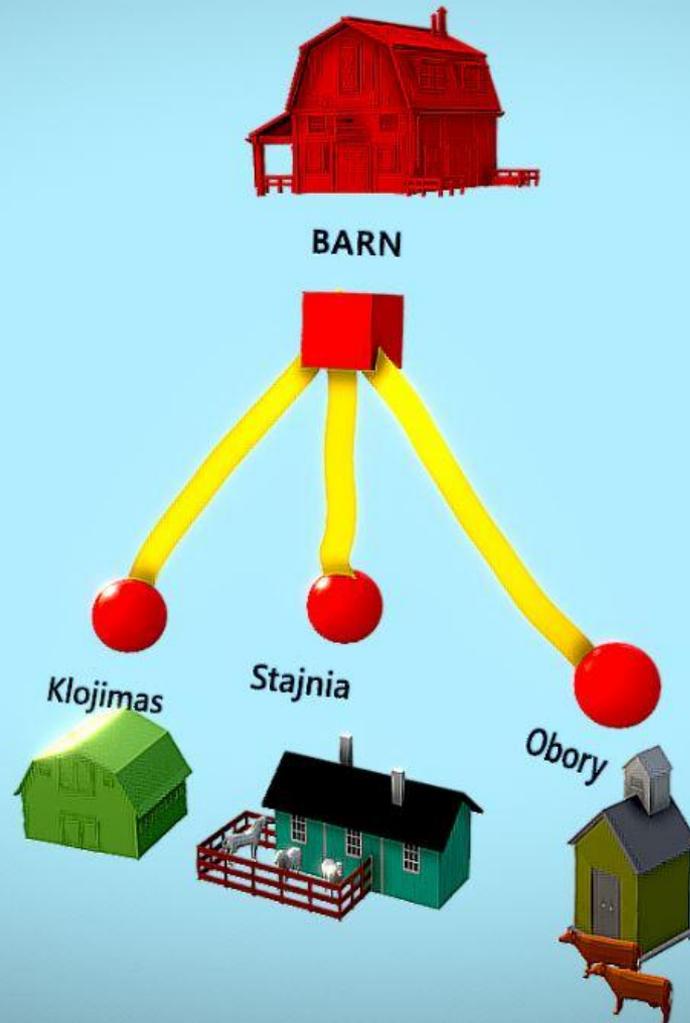
Between (re)construction & 'public hallucination'

<...> rainbow observations are like hallucinations, in that they are not of real things. But they are unlike hallucinations because they are public. *Nature creates public hallucinations. So public, in fact, that the camera* captures them as well! The observations are scientifically significant in part because they can also be made indirectly, so to speak, with the camera as instrument.

Bas C. van Fraassen (2009, p. 103)

Some of these public hallucinations are actually ''of '' real things: e.g. the reflection of a tree in the water. <...> Some public hallucinations are not ''of'' real things; e.g. the rainbow. But of those which are not, some—only some—would still lend themselves to being conceived of or identified as pictures of real things. If an image would so lend itself I'll call it '' 'copy'-qualified'' (following the *Sophist*'s distinction between making copies and creating appearances). But of any ''copy''-qualified image we can still ask: *is it really of something real, or is it not?* That is always a question of fact transcending the experience itself.

Bas C. van Fraassen (2009, p. 105)

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