

CALLIDUS – A database of exercises for learning Latin

Author: Konstantin Schulz

CALLIDUS is an interdisciplinary project with researchers from the Classics, corpus linguistics and the IT department who are jointly trying to answer the following question: Can corpus-based acquisition of vocabulary add significant value to the way we learn Latin, compared to traditional methods? For our studies, we use approaches like data-driven and computer-assisted language learning. This enables us to dynamically derive meaningful exercises from text corpora, so vocabulary can be acquired in authentic contexts using our public software (<https://korpling.org/mc/>). Its exercise generator is designed to be easily accessible to people without a previous knowledge of corpus linguistics or natural language processing. Thus, teachers in high schools are able to produce exercises independently and according to their own needs.

However, we also want the exercises to be findable and reusable. To achieve this, we have designed a public repository with an underlying PostgreSQL database, so exercises can be stored and queried according to their relevant metadata, e.g. vocabulary, textual complexity or interaction type. The repository can be used by teachers (or students) to retrieve, modify and try out exercises developed by their fellow pedagogues. In this way, didactic efforts can be shared and built upon not just within the same school, but within the whole country, in many cases even internationally.

To facilitate the process of creating new or enhancing existing exercises, we also provide various kinds of additional information about texts, so people can decide more easily what to focus on. This is helpful not just for teaching, but also for research: The Keyword In Context analysis allows to investigate usage patterns for single words by looking at visualizations of morphological, syntactic and lexical phenomena, much in the same way as a dynamic enhanced concordance.