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About the PhD project

My PhD project concerns dimensional expressions in Japanese and Swedish. My intention in the study is to examine our understanding of dimensional expressions; especially I focus on dimensional adjectives (e.g. *high*, *long* and *big*) in natural languages, above all in Japanese and in Swedish.

Dimensional expressions are supposed to be universal. Nevertheless, we see that there are both lexical and conceptual differences between dimensional expressions in the two languages, for instance *takai* ‘high’ in Japanese and *hög* ‘high’ in Swedish. The basic question is how are dimensional adjectives characterized, categorized or represented in our lexicon and in the mental lexicons of different languages.

The aims of the study are to uncover the structure and function of the dimensional adjectives from a cognitive semantic perspective. In order to work on this subject I will make three studies. The first study is designed to examine how we are framing the dimensional concepts and realizing them in language. I use corpora and dictionaries as data. I would like to see where we make boundaries between dimensional words in each lexicon, i.e. Japanese and Swedish. The second study is intended to examine how language users produce dimensional expressions inspired by visual stimuli (pictures). I would like to elicit examples of actual usage. The third study concerns how we create our understanding of dimensional expressions in our mental lexicon. I use word-association tests and examine how we associate dimensional expressions with other words.