MANUAL

Temporal Indicators in Life Narratives (DAT)

(Version 2.0)

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In cooperation with Phoebe Kürzer (2009)

To date the manual has been used for this publication:

Habermas, T., & de Silveira, C. (2008). The development of global coherence in life narratives across adolescence: Temporal, causal, and thematic aspects. *Developmental Psychology, 44*, 707-721.

The manual was constructed to code information that allows to identify the position of biographical occurrences on a time-continuum of the individual life time or calendar time (similar, but not identical to Vansina et al, 1985, p.174).

Z1 contains information about relative temporal relations between different experiences.

Z2 describes the temporal relation the present.

Z3 – Z8 contain absolute temporal indicators (Z3-Z8 are ordered by containing more and more precise temporal specification).

During coding each proposition is examined and coded separately. Information from other propositions is not considered.

Example:

1) "Yeah, so I was born…my birthday is May 5th

2) "I was born in 1990"

Proposition 1 is coded as Z4 (because the year isn't mentioned), proposition 2 is coded as Z7 (just year (date) is mentioned).

The **interviewer's knowledge** is **not considered** during coding. "I told that the last time already" is therefore not precise enough to be coded, although the interviewer knows the date of the last interview. Generally known, dateable occurrences are coded (for example Christmas or Easter, see 1, 8)

Time lags have to be **at least one day** (the occurrence cannot have happened on the day of the narration) to be coded ("yesterday evening" is therefore coded, "10 minutes ago" or "earlier" is not coded).

In case there are two temporal indicators in the same proposition, code that indicator that provides the best temporal indication.

Example:

"…and with 3 years, when I started going to kindergarten" is coded with 6, "I go to College since half a year" is coded with 1 because here "half a year" is used to date and not the first term "College".

DO NOT CODE:

Do NOT code biographical information about others, if they do not explicitly refer to the narrator's life time.

Do NOT code temporal information which does not reveal anything about when the occurrence took place.

Example:

"He was 2 years older than me"

Do NOT code temporal information if it regards events that did not really happen (for example if they are hypothetical, atemporal, or in the future)

Example:

"You are not going to prepare yourself for secondary school before the age of 12" (generally admitted, doesn't say anything of a specific time in the narrator's life)

"I should go off (leave?) school with 13 but that didn't work out" (the dated occurrence didn't take place)

"We could just drive to the sea over the weekend" (it is not clear, which weekend is meant)

Do NOT code **imprecise time specifications like**

- **"…for** a while I liked this as well"
- "I got the job, but **then** changed my mind
- "I haven't been there **for a while**"
- "I will meet with him **soon**"
- "**Later on** (in life) I will become a flamenco dancer or actress"
- "That happened just **recently**"
- "That was **just now** (not now, but maybe a few days ago)"
- "**In the old days**, everything was better"

In contrast precise statements have a precise indication of time like X weeks, X days, X years afterwards, at X o'clock etc. (see example for Z1)

Do NOT code **repetitive occurrences**, because they do not provide additional information about the temporal order (chronology). Examples are "we go tenpin bowling **every Wednesday**", "I go up at six **every day**", "we **always** have lunch at 1pm"

Do NOT code **frequencies**, because they don't contain a temporal order. Examples are "we **always** made jokes about that", "we went there relatively **often**", "**from time to time** we go out for a drink".

Do NOT code "**there**", "**then**" and "**when**", because this is often a part of the narrative style of a person and it doesn't provide a precise indication of when something took place.

<u>**DO CODE:**</u>

Do CODE comments on the narration, if the temporal indication is precise enough ("I told that already **two weeks ago**, right!?")

Do CODE statements related to future, if the temporal indication is precise enough ("in 2 weeks, I'll see her again" would be coded as 2)

Code Z1   Relative temporal specifications of order

Coded are temporal indications that allow a more precise temporal location in the sequence of events, without offering the possibility the event or time span within the individual life or the calendar. These statements do not simply state "a temporal sequence ("later") but specifiy the time lag between 2 events (for example "3 days later" instead of "later"). The time lag between 2 events or the duration has to be at least one day to be coded. "Yesterday evening" or "I've been waiting two days for that" are therefore coded, "10 minutes ago" is not.

In these statements the **temporal position relative to other events** is specified.

These statements have to provide a temporal orientation *for the listener*.

Times of day and days of the week are coded here, if their precise date is NOT provided and if they do NOT denote repetitive events (like "we go tenpin bowling **every Wednesday**")

Do NOT code historical events that allow a temporal localization in calendar time (for example "fall of the Berlin wall" or "the accident in Tschernobyl"). This is coded under Z5.

Do NOT code hypothetical events, which do not refer to a specific time or time frame.

Examples for Z1:

- *Month before*
- *Years later*
- And that was *on the third day*
- *The first time for one or two years*
- *For the past 3 years*
- To get up at *6 o'clock* (Reason: The time shows the relation of this event to other events on that day, but it doesn't allow to identify tha precise day whn this took place in calendar time))
- That took *weeks*
- All together they were married for 12 years
- We met again on *Wednesday*
- We were together for *3 years*
- I was very exhausted *in the evening*
- We went to Spain on *summer holiday* (Reason: The proposition contains no year, but you can locate the month of *summer* holiday roughly. If the proposition reveals the year – in the same line - this had to be coded under Z7)
- We were at my grandmother's place *on Easter* (same as above: If the year is revealed in the line, this proposition would be coded under Z7)

Code Z2   Temporal indication relative to the present

An event is temporally located by indicating the distance from the present.

Examples for Z2:

- I think this is half a year ago

- Just the day before yesterday

- I haven't heard from him for 7 month

- That was last year

- Didn't I tell that yesterday?

- Last summer holiday we went to Spain (The year is obvious for the interviewer, but not for the general public. Knowledge of the interviewer is ignored.)

- Next lo last Easter we were at my grandmother's place (same as above interviewer knowledge is ignored)

- I go to Malta this year

Code Z3   Temporal indication by provision of a conventional (social, biological, or age-related) life phase

This code captures the relation to conventional phases of life like school age and infancy as well as standard cultural events like first day of school, graduation, typical religious events like Communion or Confirmation etc.

Events and phases of life are culturally standardized or conventional, if someone with a similar socio-cultural background as the narrator is able to allocate a specific age or age period to this event.

Temporal dependent clauses (usually beginning with temporal conjunctions such as *when, since, while, ever since, as soon as…* - see examples)are coded, if they specify a conventional life phase .

Also sentences containing an adverbial temporal indication of time relating to a conventional life phase are coded.

There is a special rule for the information "on my xth birthday". This is indeed a conventional event, but is coded under Z6 (age)

Examples for Z3:

- *When* I had my Confirmation, I wasn't together with her anymore

- *Since* my first day in school I was afraid of the teachers

- I met her in *fourth grade*

- I had nearly no friends *at the end of kindergarten*

Further examples:

- When I started school *in first grade*

- Till *my first day of school*

- Until I *finished school*

- *When I was young*/little

- *Later in life* (when I'm a grown up)

- After my *Bar-Mizwa*

- Before I went to *kindergarten*

- At the *beginning of College*
- *When* I came to *after school care club*
- *When I was a child* I didn't realize all that
- I came there *as little first year student*

Basically only those time specifications are coded, which allow to date/locate the events in life. Therefore "my school experiences weren't good" is not coded, nor is "I had a very happy childhood".

Code Z4   Precise date without specification of the year though (the year isn't clear in that *line*)

- We married at the 13th *of August*
- We spent *Christmas* with my grandma (it's generally known that Christmas is on the 24th, 25th, and 26th of December. Therefore it counts as a precise date)
- We drunk very much on *Sylvester* (same as above)

Code Z5   Dating/locating by historical events

- I met her again in the night when the Berlin wall fell
- I experienced the *end of war* there
- *Tschernobyl … [the explosion of the nuclear plant in 1986] l*

Code Z6   The narrator's age

- I *was 14* at that point
- I was *still 14* there, I became 15
- I moved here *with 8*
- On my birthday, *when I became 9*, we drove to my grandma (The proposition "on my x birthday" is coded here)

Do NOT code the proposition "on my birthday" if no date or age is mentioned, because this doesn't gives a unequivocal time specification

Code Z7   Specification of year (with or without season or month)

- And now Rimini was in *1996*
- *In July 1998* we had school graduation
- I think it was the *fall of 1989* when I came into the new school
- Last year …[Both narrator and listener know which year that is]

Code Z8   Precise dates (Z8)

- September 11th of 2001
- I remember the day when we came together: It was the 16th November, 2000
- On Christmas in 2006 we had snow everywhere
- I overslept *last Sylvester*

The proposition with the date also has to comprise information regarding the year