12th ANNUAL TSLL

Technology for Second Language Learning Conference

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Beyond Form: Functional Perspectives on CALL Research and Teaching

Iowa State University, Memorial Union

September 12 & 13, 2014

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 23, 2014

The Applied Linguistics and Technology program at Iowa State University invites proposals for the 2014 TSLL Conference. This year's theme revolves around the connection between how language has evolved in our societies to accomplish goals— in other words, a functional model of language—and the role technology can play in researching or teaching language functions.

Plenary Speaker: Michael (Mick) O'Donnell, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

The focus of Mick O'Donnell's research has always been to understand the functional nature of language, a system which is both highly structured yet organically complex. To this end, He has explored computational modelling of language, both in terms of generating texts from underlying information representation, and automatic analysis of text to reveal meaningful patterns.

More recently, he has been exploring how we learn foreign languages, using learner corpora, manual error annotation, and automatic syntactic annotation, to identify the critical lexical and grammatical problems of specific sets of learners.

He has been developing corpus annotation tools since 1992, including Systemic Coder, RSTTool, and more recently, UAM CorpusTool, which has been downloaded over 17,000 times in the past seven years.

Mick's Keynote Speech:
Exploring Learner Development in Terms of Evolving Contexts of Use

Learner corpora have been used to identify the critical linguistic problems faced by particular L1 communities (e.g., problems of when to use an article in Spanish and Japanese learners of English). Such studies provide information as to where we need to focus our teaching efforts for the particular group. Two types of analysis are most common: Error Analysis, to identify the most frequently produced errors of the group, and automatic syntactic analysis, to identify over-use or under-use of syntactic structures in the learners, compared to natives.

For grammatical constructions, the most basic production problems relate to knowing *how* to produce the structure: learners lack knowledge as to how the structure should be formed, and thus produce syntactically wrong text, for instance, as in "*He said me that…*", or "He *asked me who am I*".

However, even after learners master the construction of linguistic form, they still continue to make errors in regards to *when* to use the structure: in what expressive context is the form appropriate? For instance, the present perfect construction is fairly similar between English and Spanish, but (at least for European Spanish) the contexts of use are not identical. While a Spanish speaker might say "He comido el desayuno esta mañana" at any time in the day, an English speaker would only say "I've had breakfast this morning" while still having food in the stomach.

In this presentation, I will explore a learner corpus methodology based upon fine coding the "context of use" of grammatical forms used by the learner, with the goal of exploring which contexts of use of each structure are problematic for the learners in question.

In addition, by using a learner corpus ranged over six proficiency levels, I will show how the learners developmentally move from an interlingua where the contexts of use of structures approximate the L1, gradually mastering each context of use until their usage conforms to native patterns.

For example, we can explore problems of article optionality in terms of differing contexts of use: we can posit a number of distinct expressive contexts for nominal reference, combining reference to a specific or generic entity, abstract or concrete, definite or indefinite, singular or plural, mass or count. For many of these contexts, both Spanish and English have similar expressive choices. However, in contexts of referring to generic plurals or abstract terms, English prefers no article, while Spanish requires an article (e.g. "*Drugs are a problem for society*." Vs. "*Los drogas son una problema para la sociedad.*"). By mapping out the errors of use that learners make over developmental stages, we can identify where in their developmental path each context of use becomes critical, and thus where over a teaching curriculum attention on that context is most needed.

The Twelfth Annual TSLL conference aims to bring together researchers and teachers who are interested in better understanding functional perspectives on language for researching, teaching, testing, and learning through technology.

Proposals are invited for papers and posters on current practices, challenges, and research directions that address form/function connections within CALL research and teaching. We are especially interested in topics that address one or more of the following areas:

- How can a functional approach to language be exploited for the development of technological innovations in language education?
- What form/function connections can inform technology for language education?
- What are successful practices in computer-assisted teaching of disciplinary language?
- How does the language teacher use technology to help meet the practical challenges of teaching language?
- How can students in a language class use technology to obtain useful models for and feedback on their language?
- How can technology help in assessing students' language learning?
- How can the analytic approaches from functional linguistic theories help teachers use technology to understand the challenges language presents to students?
- How can work in corpus linguistics and computational linguistics help to develop appropriate tools for teaching and learning language across the disciplines?

Types of presentations
- Papers: Theory-oriented presentations or reports on completed research related to the theme of the conference. The speaker will have 20 minutes to present, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments.
- Posters: Presentations of work in progress and research at the planning phase. All poster presenters will give a 5-minute introduction of their study to the whole audience, and will then host their posters for the rest of the session. This is a great opportunity for graduate students to discuss their research plans.
- Colloquia: **New for 2014!** Theory-oriented presentations or reports on completed research related to the theme of the conference that allow for discussion on a proposed topic. Each colloquium will allow for 75 minutes during which speakers will present and lead a discussion.

Submissions should be made by May 23, 2014 through the following link:

TSLL Proposal Submissions

Submissions for Individual Papers and Posters should include the presenter's name, contact information, co-presenter's name(s), institutional affiliation, type of presentation, title of proposal and 250-word abstract. Colloquium submissions should include the above but the abstract can be up to 500 words.

If you have questions regarding the abstract submission, please email tsll@iastate.edu. Acceptances will be sent by June 28.