Homework 5

Linguistics 384 (Detmar Meurers)

Due at beginning of class on Thursday, December 2.

1. You're going to look at an exercise for learners of Spanish. For our purposes, you will not need to actually understand Spanish—I will tell you what to type. Go to:

    http://www.colby.edu/~bknelson/exercises/adj_noun.html

    The exercises are supposed to help the students learn how to form plurals in Spanish. It shows a list of noun phrases and asks the students to type in the plural forms in the field next to each phrase.

    (a) Type in the following (exactly as it's spelled below) for the first item (*el doctor alemán*):

    los doctoras alemanes

    Hit return and record how the system reacts. Is that response (un)helpful and why do you think so?

    (b) Type in the following (exactly as it's spelled below) for the second item (*un plan difícil*):

    unos plans dificils

    Hit return and record how the system reacts. Is that response (un)helpful and why do you think so?

    (c) Click on the question mark button at the end of the second item. What does it do? Is this the kind of feedback you'd like to get? Write down one argument for and one argument against it.

2. (a) Suppose a learner types in the following in some CALL system designed for people learning English:
    I loves the chalkboard.
    What is the learner's problem?

    (b) Now suppose the learner also types in the following:[1]
    He hates dust.
    You runs a lot.
    How would keeping a student model help us pinpoint the user's problem more precisely?

    (c) The correct rule for subject verb agreement in English is that the subject and the verb must agree in *person* and *number*, i.e., a first person singular subject (*I*) must have a first person singular verb (e.g. *am, love, ...*). Describe a mal-rule, or mal-rules, which would allow the system to process the ill-formed input *I loves*, *I is*,

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[1]Just so you're not second-guessing yourself, the *hates* sentence is a correct English sentence.

3. In class, we examined the pros and cons of the "Dictation" exercise. We quickly looked at 5 other exercise types (Build a Phrase, Which Word is Different, Word Order Practice, and Fill-in-the-Blank). Pick one other exercise type and give me at least 2 pros and 2 cons of using that type of exercise for language learning. (Think about what skill the exercise tests, what technology it requires, etc.)

4. Interview someone taking a language course here at OSU.

   (a) Record which language they are studying and which class they are taking.

   (b) Based on what we learned in class, what stage of L2 acquisition are they at? Write down your answer and give reasons why.

   (c) Together with them, identify a problematic area in their language learning and write down which you picked.

   (d) Design (i.e., sketch out) an ICALL exercise that would address their need. Write it down and address the following questions:

       i. What technology would you need?
       ii. What level of users do you expect?
       iii. What kind of exercise best addresses their particular problem?
       iv. What kind of feedback do they prefer?

       (If you're having trouble getting started, take a look at Heift's exercises and the system we looked at in class as a starting point.)

   (e) Finally, think about presentation issues. Go to:

       http://web.uvic.ca/hcmc/rnd/weblang

       and look at the different kinds of exercises and graphics they use. Does this give you any new ideas for the exercises you are designing? Write down some thoughts addressing this question.