SPLICR: A Web-Platform for Exploring, Querying and Distributing Linguistic Resources

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Overview

- Project Background: Aim of the Project
- Different Annotation Strategies
- Generalised Architecture for Sustainability of Linguistic Data (GENAU)
- Merging differently annotated corpora
 - Transforming Single Rooted Trees
 - Transforming Annotation Graphs
 - Transforming Stand-off Annotations
- The Platform SPLICR

Project: Sustainability of Linguistic Data

Principal Investigators: Marga Reis, Erhard Hinrichs (Tübingen)

Project Members:

Christian Chiarcos (Potsdam), Timm Lehmberg (Hamburg) Georg Rehm, Oliver Schonefeld, Andreas Witt (Tübingen)

Programming:

Johannes Dellert, Kilian Evang, Jonathan Khoo

Aim of the Project: Sustainability of Linguistic Data

- Main goal:
 - Resources acquired in long-term projects from three Collaborative Research Centres have to be converted in one format to be sustainably usable by researchers and applications
- Additional aims:
 - Provide unified access for the heterogeneous data acquired in the projects
 - General methodologies and 'Rules of Best Practice'

The unusual starting point of the project

- In 2005 the German Science Foundation (DFG) initiated a joint project of three Collaborative Research Centres:
 - Linguistic Data Structures Research Centre 441 located in Tübingen
 - *Multilingualism* Research Centre 538 located in Hamburg
 - Information Structure Research Centre 632 located in Potsdam and Berlin
- Each Collaborative Research Center is a combination of ~15 research projects

Working areas / Areas of research

- Annotation formats
- Metadata
- Ontologies
- Corpus query
- Data visualization
- Legal Issues

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- Future developments

Resources and Annotation Schemes

- Researchers create linguistic data with a specific linguistic theory and a concrete research question in mind
- This results in highly heterogeneous approaches to linguistic data handling and markup languages
- All three research centres involved address this problem: at each site, a central project is assigned with the task of developing methods:
 - for the creation,
 - annotation and
 - analysis of linguistic data

Tübingen: Linguistic Data Structures

- Topic: Linguistic Data Structures
- Established: 1999
- At the moment ca. 100 researchers are involved
- projects investigating specific linguistic phenomena
 - with regard to general methodological issues, or
 - concerning a particular language or language family
- Almost all projects use corpora
- About 20 corpora have been created

TUSNELDA

- Despite the diversity of the corpora created in Tübingen, they all share the same generic data model
- All corpora are structured hierarchically
- A common annotation scheme, called TUSNELDA, was developed:
 - DTD
 - Annotation guidelines

- Annotation: manual and automatic
- Embedded (inline) annotation, immediately modelling hierarchical structures by XML hierarchies
- Main Reason for using embedded markup:
 - Standard XML tools (such as XML editors and XML-parsers) are optimised for processing hierarchical XML structures with embedded annotation

TUSNELDA-Annotation: An Tibetan Example

khra·phru·gu	med·tshug
child-Abs	NEG-exist
Translation: 'Ø [=They] had no children.'
Structure of the an	notation/Example annotation:
<s></s>	
<clause></clause>	
<ntnode></ntnode>	.
<tok id="</td><td>v6"></tok>	
<clauseca< td=""><td>t></td></clauseca<>	t>
<punct> <td>nct></td></punct>	nct>

```
<s><clause><ntNode>
```

```
<tok>
     <orth>khra•phru•qu</orth>
     <pos>NOM:anim~pers</pos>
</tok>
<ntNodeCat>NP</ntNodeCat>
<desc><case>Abs</case></desc></ntNode>
<tok id="v6">
     <orth n="2">med-tshug</orth>
     <pos>VFIN</pos>
     <desc> ...</desc>
           <feature type="part">Neg</feature>
           <frame>... </frame>
           <realframe>... </realframe>
                     .....</clause></s>
```

Hamburg: Research Centre on Multilingualism

- 14 projects, all of them work empirically
- Written or transcribed spoken language
- Different linguistic research topics, e.g. language acquisition
- \rightarrow The data differ with respect to many dimensions
- To provide a unified access the EXMaRALDA system was developed

EXMaRALDA's Basic Data Model

- Based on the "Single Timeline, Multiple Tiers" model (annotation graphs framework)
- Individual descriptions (events) are grouped into a number of tiers (or layers)
- Ideally, a start and an end point of each event is marked on a single, fully ordered timeline
- This model is also used in other systems and tools, e.g. Praat, ELAN, TASX
- Directed, acyclic graphs
- XML as storage format, no hierarchies
- Ontologically empty framework, i.e. it abstracts from linguistic theories

Transcription: [v] Description: [nv] Annotation: [sup],[en],[pho]

DS [sup]		faster		
DS [v]	Okay.	D'accord	d'accord.	
DS [en]	Okay.	Agreed, agreed	1.	
DS [nv]			right hand raised	
FB [v]			Alors ça dépend ((cough))	un petit peu.
FB [en]			That depends then, a little bit.	
FB [pho]				[étipø:]

Potsdam/Berlin: Information Structure

- Information Structure concerns the means used by the speaker or writer to structure discourse and utterances
- Languages differ a lot with regard to the means to express Information Structure, e.g., intonation, word order, etc.
- Empirical base: Different types of corpora, languages, and annotations

Potsdam's Corpus Interchange Format

- Stand-off XML-annotation
 - allows for conflicting hierarchies
 - extensive use of XLinks, XPointers to link files
- Generic XML elements
 - based on upcoming ISO-Standard Linguistic Annotation Framework
 - flexible enough to encode all kinds of data structures
 - flat lists of XML elements; hierarchies encoded by XLinks
 - <mark> markables
 <struct> hierarchical structures
 <feat> annotations

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Motivation: Why yet another format?

- TUSNELDA, EXMARaLDA and PAULA all generalise over projectspecific data models and formats
- We need: a data model which generalises over TUSNELDA, EXMARaLDA and PAULA.
- This model must be applicable for all the language data already annotated:
 - Hierarchical annotations with embedded markup
 - Graph based annotations
 - Distributed markup using stand-off techniques
- Exchange format should be as simple as possible

- "Genau":
 - Generalisierte Nachhaltigkeitsarchitektur f
 ür linguistische Daten (Generalised Architecture for Sustainability for linguistic data)
 - German for: accurate, close, correct, definite, demanding, detailed, exact, faithful, fine, just, minute, pedantic, precise, right, strict
- Provides a format for an Unified Linguistic Annotation
- The original annotation format becomes irrelevant

Genau: Format description

- In general, the Genau-Format can be modeled by means of Multirooted trees (MRTs)
- MRTs are neither as constrained as a tree, nor as open as an unrestricted graph
- Storing:
 - in an XML-Database (for processing, e.g. querying)
 - in individual XML files (as a sustainable interchange format)
- Each file represents all the information related to a single linguistic annotation layer

Transformatios into the Genau-Format

- Corpora annotated based on the hierarchical model are analysed semi-automatically
- After the analyses, information on the layers is included in the (still single rooted) XML document instance
- In the next step, the hierarchically annotated corpora is split into individual XML files
- *Timeline-based corpora* are split using another tool in order to separate the graph annotations
- Standoff annotations and the text are merged

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Transforming Single Rooted Trees

- A tree-based XML document (such as a corpus) with multiple annotation layers may need to be separated
- "Leveler" is a pipeline for XML-document transformations
- Leveler serves two purposes:
 - 1. Moving PCDATA text to attributes (thereby separating any PCDATA annotations from the actual primary data)
 - 2. Splitting the corpus into different files according to the different layers of annotation (e.g., syntactic, morphological, etc.).
- The transformations are carried out using XSLT
- The configuration files for XSL-processing are created in a web application

Examples for Text Transformations

• Original

<w>Peter</w>

<pos>NN</pos>

<punct>!</punct>

• "Real PCDATA"

<w>Peter</w> (identity)

• "Annotation"

<pos leveler:text="NN"/>

• Mixed

<punct leveler:text="!">!</punct>

<tokid="s 18 n 2"> <orth>Landesvorsitzende</orth> <pos func="HD">NN</ pos> </tok>



<tokid="s_18_n_2"> <orth>Landesvorsitzende</orth> <posfunc="HD"leveler:text="NN"/> </tok>

Leveler Pipeline



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9	<event end="T3" start="T1">faster</event>	Builde
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11		
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13	<event end="T3" start="T2">Alors ça</event>	SOAP /
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Realisation in EXMARaLDA

The relations of segments and annotation are conveyed by attribute references to time line items.



Splitter



A hierarchy-based data model



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Transformation approach

• Convert as much of the hierarchies as possible to a leafordered multi-rooted tree.



- Convert as much of the hierarchies as possible to a leafordered multi-rooted tree.
- Where this is not possible due to crossing branches, encode relations using XLink
- Use XSLT

The GENAU data model: A multi-rooted tree (MRT)



Example Data in the Format "Genau"

<genau>

pos.tok.xml

```
<genau>
  <cat value="NP">
      <const id="s2">
           <tok id="t5">Die</tok>
           <tok id="t6">einstige</tok>
           <tok id="t7">Fußball-Weltmacht</tok>
           </const>
           </const>
           </cat>
           </cat>
           </cat>
           </cat>
```

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SPLICR: An overview

- SPLICR: Sustainability Platform for Linguistic Corpora and Resources
- The sustainability platform consists of a front-end and a back-end
- The front-end
 - is the user visible part and is realized using Java Server Pages (JSP), JavaScript and Ajax technologies
 - runs in the user's browser
 - provides functions for searching and exploring metadata records and corpus data
- The back-end is a web application that runs on top of the Tomcat application server
- In addition, a staging area (the data repository) contains the normalized corpora

The staging area

- All corpora and metadata are converted in a normalized form
- A manifest file is generated for each corpus
- The manifest is a simple XML format and acts as a corpus inventory list
- Manifest files are generated semi-automatically
- Each corpus consists of five parts:
 - the manifest file,
 - multiple files that contain the processed corpus data,
 - multiple files that contain the metadata record
 - the original and unchanged corpus files, and
 - stylesheets, logfiles etc.

Resources in the staging area

Importer service



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The directory structure of the staging area (excerpt)



The web-based Platform: Front-end and back-end

The web-based Platform: Front-end and back-end



The Back-end

- The back-end hosts the JSP files and related data.
- It accesses two different databases,
 - the corpus database and
 - the system database.
- Furthermore, all additional files (e.g. original corpus data files, documentation, transformation scripts) are stored in the file system
- Several servlets provide means for exchanging information between the front-end and the back-end.
- The back-end is implemented as a web application that runs on top of Apache's Tomcat servlet container.
- The corpus database is an eXist XML database, extended by the AnnoLab system (Richard Eckart and ElkeTeich)
- A System database

System database

- Uses a relational database (MySQL)
- Contains data about user accounts and acts as a catalogue for corpus data
- Stores information about
 - single files in a corpus,
 - resource groups (i.e., corpora) and
 - access rights.
- A specific user can only access a specific resource if the permissions for this user/resource pair allow this operation

Carrying out a query

- The front-end sends a JSON representation of the query and a list of the corpora currently selected by the user to the query dispatcher servlet
- A servlet transforms the query into XQuery by generating, for every single file of all selected corpora, a dedicated XQuery expression
- This set of XQuery expressions is linked to a query job which is executed using a worker-thread of the query service component
- At the same time, a unique query ID is returned to the front-end, which will start polling results
- The XQuery expressions are run sequentially against the corpus database
- Results are buffered within the back-end until the front-end fetches them

Advantages of this query process implementation

- The user can already start exploring the first result even though the system is still running queries on the remaining files
- A query monitor exists in the administration area of the front-end.
- It allows the administrator to display all currently running query jobs with additional details such as average query runtime per file and estimated remaining total runtime
- The administrator can cancel query jobs

The Front-end supports answering the questions

- Which linguistic resources are stored in the platform?
- Can one or more of these corpora be used as empirical data bases for a specific research question one is working on?
- What is the extent of the annotations of these resources and do they cover what is needed for one's research endeavor?

A typical usage scenario



Front end functionalities

- As soon as one or more corpora are selected the user can access the query interface which is based on two main concepts.
- Three different kinds of search widgets
 - full-text search,
 - concept search, and
 - tree fragment search.
- The query interface supports multiple tabs that can be added and deleted at will

Metadata Exploration

- As soon as a user logs onto the system a complete list of resources currently stored in SPLICR is presented
- Drop-down menus can be used to filter the list
- A click on the "information" icon expands the row that contains the name of the resource and its affiliation
- This expanded view shows
 - a brief description of the corpus,
 - its version,
 - the annotation layers, and
 - The number of files associated with this resource.

Listing of available resources – Selecting esources

00		Sust	ainability Pla	tform for Lingui	uistic Corpora and Resources – Resources available in SPLICR C
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Imprint Change Password Logout		Audio recordings Norwegian, Swedish). according to the HIAT-	and annotate The audio re standard.	d transcriptions o cordings have be	s of semi-communication and receptive multilingualism in present-day Scandinavian languages (Danish, been collected at several classes and from radio transmissions. They have been transcribed and annotated
		Version:			12th June, 2008
		Annotation layers:			Contribution of Events, Contribution of Utterances, Comments I, Events, English Translation, Code Switching, German Translation, Phononological Comments
		Number of associated	resource files	5:	468
			select		data sample contents and download
	습 🥑	KonSim	Θ	Corpus	Universität Hamburg, SFB 538 Project K06: Coherence in Interpreter-Mediated Discourse
	습 🧿	Potsdam Commentary Corpus, public subsec	/ tion ⊜	Corpus	Universität Potsdam, SFB 632: Information Structure Project D01: Linguistic Database for Information Structurally Annotated Corpora
	습 🥑	Tatian corpus	Θ	Corpus	Universität Potsdam, SFB 632: Information Structure Project B04: The role of information structure in the development of word order regularities in Germanic
	☆ 🕖	TüPoDia-Korpus	Θ	Corpus	Universität Tübingen, SFB 441: Linguistic Data Structures Project B09: Local and Temporal Deixis in the Romance Languages: History and Variation
	0			Super Corpus	Universität Tübingen, SFB 441: Linguistic Data Structures

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0			Super Corpus	Universität Tübingen, SFB 441: Linguistic Data Structures				

Metadata Exploration

 If the user wants to know more, the hyperlink "contents and download" switches to a view that lists all files that belong to a corpus

Contents and download

Resources	Bosnische Interviews O Corpus Universität Tübingen, SFB 441: Linguistic Da Project B08: Corpusbased Analysis of Local (Reflected) Written Language	ta Structures and Temporal Deictics	in (Spontaneously) Spoken and show	five files per group		
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	1b8-interviewheader-metadaten.xml (source file)2b8-interviews-BG1-metadaten.xml (source file)3b8-interviews-BG2-metadaten.xml (source file)4b8-interviews-BH-metadaten.xml (source file)5b8-interviews-BJ-metadaten.xml (source file)	Metadata Metadata Metadata Metadata Metadata	text/xml text/xml text/xml text/xml text/xml	3127 1382 1382 1273 1334		

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Multiple Methods of Querying Corpora

- The target users (i. e., linguists) are (in general) not proficient in XML query languages such as XPath and XQuery,
- Therefore, intuitive query interfaces that generalize from the underlying data structures and querying methods are presented:
 - Full-Text Search: The full-text search query widget can be used to find certain words or simple patterns in corpora. Matches are highlighted in the result browser.
 - Concept Search: The concept search query widget presents a list of linguistic concepts that are contained in the individual annotation layers that make up a corpus.
 - Tree-Fragment Search: an interactive editor for constructing linguistic tree fragments that can be queried against the currently selected corpus

Example 1: The concept-search

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Example 2: The tree-editor for constructing queries



Presentation of the search results

- We provide three different query widgets that can be used to search and query corpora.
- The results of these queries are visualized by the result browser that offers four different display modes:
 - plain text view
 - XML view
 - box view
 - tree view

Results view: tree view



Results view: XML view

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Results view: box view

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Summery:

- Project Background: Aim of the Project
- Different Annotation Strategies
- Generalised Architecture for Sustainability of Linguistic Data (GENAU)
- Merging differently annotated corpora
 - Transforming Single Rooted Trees
 - Transforming Annotation Graphs
 - Transforming Stand-off Annotations
- The Platform SPLICR

Publication:



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