

# Assignment 8

## CALL

Social context of language technology use

DUE: March 10, 2004

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

The exercises are supposed to help the students learn how to form plurals in Spanish. Here is what I want you to type for the first three questions.

- los doctores alemanes
  - unos planes dificiles
  - las mujers tristes
- (a) Record what response you get for each one.
  - (b) If you click on the question mark (?), you can see the correct answer. Looking at the third example (*las mujers...* 'the sad women'), tell me why this method of feedback is unhelpful. Specifically, look at the how the adjective *tristes* ('sad') is treated.
  - (c) Is this more of a frame-based system or a true ICALL system?
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:<sup>1</sup>  
*He hates dust.*  
*You runs a lot.*  
How would keeping a student model help us pinpoint the user's problem more precisely?

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<sup>1</sup>Just so you're not second-guessing yourself, the *hates* sentence is a correct English sentence.

- (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*,
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. Note that for both parts (a) and (b) there is no one right answer. Thus, the “why” part of the question is crucial.
    - (a) Of the feedbacks we looked at in class, which kind of feedback is the best for *intermediate* learners in a *classroom* setting? Why?
    - (b) Now, think about a CALL setting. Is your answer to (a) still the best kind of feedback? Why or why not?
  5. Interview someone taking a language course here at OSU.
    - (a) Determine what stage of L2 acquisition they are at and give reasons why.
    - (b) With them, identify a problematic area in their language learning.
    - (c) Design (i.e. Sketch out) an ICALL exercise that would address their need. What technology would you need? What level of users do you expect? What kind of exercise best addresses their particular problem? 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.
  6. A lot of warnings about science and technology use is couched in science fiction terms. So, for example, the movie *Waterworld* (bad as it is) tries to show the dangers of mistreating the environment with our technologies. *The Matrix* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* warn against dependence on computers; *Dr. Strangelove*<sup>2</sup> warns against the production of atomic bombs. And so it goes.

Unfortunately, rarely does an author rail against the dangers of language technology. We don’t usually see a movie displaying the dangers of spell checkers or machine translation systems or whatever.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it<sup>3</sup>, is to sketch out a plot for a story (or book or movie) warning against the use of some language technology that we have discussed this quarter.

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<sup>2</sup> Or: *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

<sup>3</sup> and for the sake of your grade, I recommend that you do accept it