

The GALOES Grammar Authoring Environment

The traditional triad of language description comprises a text collection, a dictionary, and a grammatical description. For the first two, specialized software is available to assist the authors in developing a text collection (Toolbox) or a dictionary (We say, Lexique Pro, Lexus). This talk presents the grammar authoring platform GALOES, which aims at providing similar assistance for the creation of the third component, the grammatical description.

Starting a grammatical description (GD) is no easy task since many areas in a language are heavily interconnected and it is often difficult to decide whether one should discuss one aspect (e.g. word classes) before another (e.g. morphology) or whether the reverse order would be better. To fully understand the morphology, one should know how parts-of-speech are defined, but to define parts-of-speech, one might have to rely on morphology, so that an optimal order does not exist. This difficulty arises from the linear structure that a book imposes on the GD. In non-linear, web-like structures, like those found on the internet, this ordering problem does not arise. One can have a page on word classes and a page on morphology and link the two to provide background information where necessary. While there are interesting theoretical aspects to the underlying principles of electronic GDs and the technical implementations (Nordhoff *fc*, Nordhoff 2007a,b), this talk will focus on practical aspects of GALOES and show how a grammar author can collect and structure his/her data and analyses.

We will discuss the creation of pages for formal and functional phenomena, the linking between pages and integration of multimedia files in a first part. In a second part, we will present the advantages of an electronic grammar authoring platform for quality management (automated formatting of examples, compare versions, revert changes, tagging, notes, wanted pages) and collaboration (track changes, subscribe to changes, talk pages). Time permitting, we will also explore the advantages for the reader, like bookmarks, full text search, index, integration of the LDS questionnaire, cross-language searching.

The system has been tested for the description of Sri Lanka Malay, but particular field sites or languages might have special requirements that need to be taken into account. Questions and comments as to the applicability of the system in particular contexts are especially welcome.

References

- NORDHOFF, S. (2007a). "The grammar authoring system GALOES" Paper presented at *Wikifying research*, June 2007, MPI Leipzig
- NORDHOFF, S. (2007b). "Grammar writing in the Electronic Age". Paper presented at *ALT VII*, September 2007, Paris.
- NORDHOFF, S (*fc*). "Electronic reference grammars for typology: challenges and solutions". To appear in *Language Description and Conservation*.