Tense and Aspect in Learner Language:

Issues and Advances in the Use of Language Corpora

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Traditional approaches to the study of the morphosyntax of learner language were often based on experimental or elicited data (e.g., acceptability judgements, cloze tests, etc.), where evidence is collected in restricted contexts in order to answer a specific research question. With more and more learner corpora for various target languages becoming available to the research community (see, e.g., the extensive list on www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl-lcworld.html), the field of learner corpus research offers new perspectives on learner language, and also presents new challenges.

Learner corpora present many advantages to both individual researchers and the community: (i) they are usually large (typically, hundreds of thousands or millions of words), making it easier to achieve empirical validity; (ii) they are often publicly available, making it easier to check whether previous results can be reproduced and substantiated; and (iii) annotations of linguistic features can be produced collaboratively and shared along with the original data. All these advantages contribute to making the research efforts of the community more data-driven, and thus more reliable and representative of authentic learner language.

More specifically, the expression of temporal relations (in terms of tense and aspect) is central in all processes of communication (Housen 2002), but commonly perceived and described as a hurdle for non-native speakers (see, e.g., van der Wurff 1999; Davydova 2011). Therefore, the topic of tense and aspect has already received considerable attention in the literature (see, e.g., contributions in Dietrich, Klein & Noyau and Salaberry & Shirai 2002), but features less prominently in recent corpus-based studies of learner language (but see, e.g., Römer 2005 or Rogatcheva 2014 for exceptions). With this workshop, we intend to close this gap und to show which additional insights into the area of tense and aspect in learner language can be gained using corpus data, addressing the following aspects, amongst others:

- In which ways do corpus-based studies complement work based on other (e.g., experimental) methods?
- How can a corpus-based approach inform theories of the acquisition of tense and aspect (such as the "aspect hypothesis" or the "past tense hypothesis"; see Fuchs, Götz & Werner forthcoming) specifically, and of language acquisition in general?
- How pervasive are effects of mode/register within learner corpus data?
- Which methodological challenges (e.g. as to the categorization of variants) come to the fore when using corpus data instead of elicited data?
- How can the often-debated notion of "target(-like)" be operationalized for corpus material, where a certain amount of variation may be inherent in both the learner and target language data?
- Which implications do the findings from the learner corpora have for the teaching and learning of the target language?

We invite contributions for oral presentations of 20 minutes plus 10 minutes discussion that address these issues and use material from language corpora (potentially in combination or contrast with other types of data) to shed light on the acquisition of tense and aspect in learner language. **Please send abstracts of 300-500 words (exclusive of references) to valentin.werner@uni-bamberg.de and robert.fuchs@uni-muenster.de until March 31, 2016.** Notification of acceptance will be sent out by the end of April 2016.

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