

CONSTRUCTION ANNOTATION WORKSHOP 2020

Considerations for a Construction Annotation Tool

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What constitutes a useful and usable linguistic annotation tool? A useful tool will characterize the information that an annotation project sets out to capture, given the linguistic phenomenon under consideration, the theoretical underpinnings that drive the analysis, the labels created for that purpose, etc. A usable tool is one that facilitates “...specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use” (ISO 9241-11, 1999).

Concerned about the absence of the means for systematically testing and engineering usability of annotation tools, Burghardt (2012) determined two types of problems in the existing tools examined in that study: (1) general issues arising from the disregard of established best practices for user interface design; and (2) specific concerns involving linguistic annotation tools in particular. Visibility of system status and error prevention are examples of (1); user ability to define (or import a pre-defined) annotation scheme and an adequate visual separation between primary data and annotation markers constitute instances of (2), to identify just a few recommendations for designing a usable annotation tool.

Inspired by the desire to contribute to the (improved) development of a useful and usable tool for the identification and analysis of constructions in written texts across many different languages, this work addresses some of the challenges encountered while using the Dusseldorf annotation tool (<https://gsw.phil.hhu.de/annotationtool/annotation?id=26641>). Here, the goal is to provide (some) user feedback and advocate for the considerations of effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in service of creating a usable tool, not just a useful one, specifically in light of Burghardt’s (2012) recommendation. To illustrate various issues, this presentation also draws upon brat (<https://brat.nlplab.org/index.html>), a commonly used text annotation tool in natural language processing, as well as two other annotation tools developed specifically in the context of a FrameNet project: The SALSA Annotation Tool (Erk et al., 2003), developed for use in the SALSA (German FrameNet) project and CARMA (Matos et al., 2016), for annotating frames and constructions in FrameNet Brasil.

References

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