

## LANGUAGE, LANGUAGES AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES: ICT in the Service of Languages

The 2010 conference brings forth issues relating to language technologies. Aware of the fact that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) serve globalisation, the conference is interested in how to best employ ICT to support (a) all European languages, and (b) a new multilingual ethos of communication.

Looking critically at the effects of ICT use, but also looking to ICT for language empowerment, the conference hopes to foster initiatives for cooperation among EU member states in order to share knowledge and expertise in the following topics:

- ▶ **Language technologies**
- ▶ **Languages and the Internet**
- ▶ **Digital media and the teaching of languages**

Each topic will be addressed by the conference keynote speakers, and it will motivate talks by a select group of speakers who will present the projects and products developed in their country with the aim of supporting their official language, other languages, or multilingualism.

The rationale for these formats is for conference participants to have an opportunity:

- to inform or be informed about an area that concerns them most
- to understand, discuss, share related experiences and concerns
- to create the necessary conditions for collaborative action

## THE CONFERENCE TOPICS

### 1. LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY

The presentations within this section are concerned with projects and products using new technologies to service natural languages, e.g., electronic dictionaries, multilingual thesauri, and corpora (in the service of lexicography, language research, etc.). Contributions are concerned with the use of tools for a variety of purposes such as dictionary conversion, multilingual document generation, information extraction, language recognition, etc.

Keynote speaker 1:

**Hans USZKOREIT** is Professor of Computational Linguistics at Saarland University and Scientific Director at the German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI) where he heads the DFKI Language Technology Lab. By cooptation, Professor of the Computer Science Department and co-founder and professor of the "European Postgraduate Program Language Technology and Cognitive Systems" and a permanent member of the International Committee of Computational Linguistics (ICCL). Also a member of various European bodies, such as the European Academy of Sciences, the European Network of Language and Speech, and the European Language Resources Association (ELRA). His research interests include computer models of natural language understanding and production, advanced applications of language and knowledge technologies.



## 2. LANGUAGE AND THE INTERNET

The wide use of the Internet is creating new possibilities for languages and language contacts; it is a new contact zone. It has unlimited possibilities of doing things with language (for example to revitalise languages and dialects), and it can be of service to all languages, big and small. However, the Internet is also a space in which linguistic inequalities are reproduced and it is important to understand how so that initiatives in addition to those which have already been taken may be developed through collaborative efforts. It is important to acknowledge that though two thirds of global Internet users are non-English speakers, most of the literature on the net and computer-mediated-communication (CMC) is exclusively in English. The main objective of these contributions that present related projects and products will be to focus on Internet related CMC in various languages, and perhaps focus on difficulties related with writing systems, the structure and features of local languages and how they affect internet use, code-switching, etc.

Keynote speaker 2:

**John PAOLILLO** is Associate Professor of Information Science and Adjunct Associate Professor of Linguistics, University of Indiana, Illinois. His research interests include online social networks, Computer-Mediated Communication, the Semantic Web, multilingualism and the Internet, statistical models and quantitative research methods, computational linguistics, information retrieval, sociolinguistics.

## 3. DIGITAL MEDIA AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES

The presentation under this heading deals with projects concerned with the use of ICT in language teaching, learning (and testing) particularly initiatives that move away from the practices of the 70s and the 80s, linked with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). It takes into account the immense changes in the semiotic landscape, changes which demand that language teaching be concerned with new and multimodal texts, hypermedia, etc., and also focuses on e-learning and distance learning projects and tools, created to support language, languages, and teachers of language. Reflections and research regarding the effects of the use of ICT on language teaching curricula, materials, methods and practices are also a component of this section.

Keynote speaker 3:

**Dimitris KOUTSOGIANNIS** is Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Greek Studies, School of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Advisor to the Centre for the Greek Language and academic director of the Centre's Greek language Portal, a site which provides multiple types of e-support to those teaching, learning and/or wishing to learn Greek. He is author of numerous books and articles in Greek and English concerning the use of digital media in language education and the development of digital literacies in school.