Report on CbLLE-TUFS
April 2009

1   Project Planning

I have not seen the original plan for this project, so I can only infer from the report on 2007–08 activities how the overall project is structured. Certainly the organization Field Linguistics > Corpus Linguistics > Linguistic Informatics (p7) seems very good, in that it provides a foundation in linguistic analysis and in the typological range of natural language data, which can then feed into the corpus-based research. The focus on training researchers who can do advanced research in these three areas, and who have an international focus and network of connections, is surely the best in terms of the development of the next generation of scholars who can be academic leaders.

2   Originality

Again, without seeing the overall proposal, it is difficult to know which aspects of the project will be truly innovative. One important aspect of what I have read in the report is the focus on research training (section 9), going beyond traditional subject-matter-related courses to courses about how to do research, how to evaluate the research of others, and to methodologies important for corpus-based research. The project's aim is to produce young researchers with a wide skill-set; if they are well trained as field linguists who are are familiar with corpus-based research and/or informatics or language pedagogy, they will be well-placed to do innovative work.

3   Scientific Quality

In terms of what is planned, the scientific quality seems high. In terms of what has been produced so far, I cannot judge, as I have not seen any of it. There is already one book published out of one conference that was organized (see below), but I do not have access to the book.

4   International Contribution

International participation is a key component of the overall project, and the first year saw events bringing together the researchers in Japan with the specialists from IDS in Mannheim, the linguists from Aix-Marseille, and field linguists from SOAS (London), who helped run the training workshop for language documentation (the first workshop was in 2008 and there was another one this year). Additionally, the TUFS-based project has teams reaching out to Asia, Africa and Europe.

5   Feasibility (Results)

All of the project outlines that I have seen in the interim report appear feasible, in order to bring about the tangible planned results as well as to help develop young researchers. It will be important to have the younger researchers involved at all stages in the planning and preparation of the large-scale events, which I presume will happen each year, as well as making presentations at them.

6 Scientific results

As I mentioned above, for most individual projects it is too early to tell after one year about any significant results. In the group of Field Linguistics projects, all are well under way, some have produced working papers and workshop presentations. (No collaborating researchers are listed in 5.5 – perhaps this is an oversight.)

With regard to Corpus Linguistics, the differente teams have been gathering materials for corpora, and making or adapting tools for use on the corpora. There seems to have been considerable progress made on German, due to the ready availability of large corpora. The Corpus Linguistics teams have produced some corpus materials and dictionaries.

The Linguistic Informatics teams have been gathering materials for corpora, making tools for analysis, collecting other kinds of data (e.g., learners' errors), and have developed access to teaching materials within Moodle.

One significant outcome is the book *Corpus Analysis and Variation in Linguistics*, edited by Yuji Kawaguchi, Makoto Minegishi and Jacques Durand, which is now in print (2009) from John Benjamins.

7 Fostering young researchers

See my comments above in section 2.

It is very good to see so many presentations at international conferences by the young researchers associated with the project – on all 5 continents! There seem to have been no presentations, though, by the four post-doctoral researchers. Even within (east) Asia, there are many venues to present work in international contexts, and I presume that members of the various teams from junior scholars to senior scholars will be participating in international conferences.

I cannot fully understand from the report what, if anything, has been achieved with regard to the boldface or bulleted parts of sections 9.3–9.6. These are important aspects of the development of young researchers, and it is good to see them in the plans at least.

Summary

In summary, the first year of the current project seems to have gone well, with all main aspects of the various sub-projects successfully under way. In most cases, it is too early to see concrete results, but I fully expect such results to be evident in future annual reports. For the global success of the project, it is important for all project team members to participate on the international stage, and to form (further) links to other universities around the world.

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Peter Sells, SOAS
April 2, 2009

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