A computational morphology approach to Croatian noun inflection – focusing on gender prediction

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The purpose of the talk is to present a research of noun inflection and gender in Croatian and a computational model built with the aim to predict noun gender in the Croatian language. Gender of Croatian nouns is highly interesting to explore, both from the cognitive and linguistic point of view. Traditionally, the whole Croatian noun inflection system is seen as gender-based, i.e. gender is regarded as the main factor that governs the inflection of nouns. A classical example of the challenges of the Croatian noun inflection represents the noun det-e 'child' which has a neuter gender and in the singular inflects like most neuter nouns in -o/-e, but behaves like a feminine singular noun in -a in the plural (dec-a, 'children').

In addition, although inflection of nouns is something native speakers know well, gender something native speakers know all too well, it is very hard to devise a model that would predict both of it. The model is being generated with regard to several different approaches: Network Morphology approach, recent Natural Morphology account on Serbo-Croatian, descriptive linguistic approach, altogether with the Croatian National Corpus. Finally, although inducing gender is counterintuitive, since it is an inherent property of nouns, developing and using a tool such as this might be of great interest for everyone intent on exploring and learning Croatian, or learning more about the category of gender.

References


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