Workshop Proposal for ICON 2013

Title: Workshop on *Linguistics Olympiad and Popularizing Linguistics in Schools* (LOPLingS)

Duration: Half Day

Abstract:

Language and linguistics education in schools in India (as well as worldwide) is predominantly *prescriptive* in nature that shuns the scientific nature of the fields. This is one of the prime reasons for widespread disinterest amongst students towards (computational) linguistics[1]. There has been a worldwide movement to popularize linguistics and computational linguistics amongst school children through various activities, the most important of those being the introduction of the *International Linguistics Olympiad* (ILO)[2] in 2003 as one of the 13 Science Olympiads. India started participating in ILO since 2009, however the reach of the Panini Linguistics Olympiad[3] (the national version of the event) has been limited, though the performance of the Indian team in ILO has been excellent (three silver, two bronze medals, several honorable mentions and best solution awards). Recently, Mumbai University and Microsoft Research India have joined hands to scale up the reach of the Olympiad program and related activities by setting up regional centers, hosting school level quizzes, competitions and other events.

This workshop is motivated by a similar workshop organized in ACL 2013: *The fourth Teaching NLP/CL workshop With a Focus on Olympiads in (Computational) Linguistics*.[4,5]

The three primary goals of the proposed workshop are:

1. To make the NLPAI community aware of the current efforts.
2. Exchange of ideas and experiences amongst teachers and researchers on how to popularize (computational) linguistics in India, starting from primary and high school levels.
3. Meeting of all the present regional coordinators and identify potential volunteers and future regional coordinators.

References:

1. http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/stories-they-tell-about-languages/article4747023.ece
2. International Linguistics Olympiad, official website: http://www.ioling.org/
3. Panini Linguistic Olympiad, official website:
   https://sites.google.com/site/paninilinguisticsolympiad/
4. The fourth Teaching NLP/CL workshop With a Focus on Olympiads in (Computational) Linguistics: http://www.teachingnlp.org/
5. Papers presented in the above workshop are available at: http://aclweb.org/anthology-new/W/W13/#3400

Outline of the Workshop

This will be an *invitational* workshop. Papers will not be solicited from the community, but if somebody is interested in presenting their own experience or ideas, they can write directly to the organizers; based on the relevance and importance of the topic, a small slot might be allotted by the organizers.

The (tentative) structure of the workshop will be as follows:

- **Organizer Talk 1**: Introduction to the Panini Linguistic Olympiad Program, brief report of the current activities and experiences
  Speaker: Zarana Sarda, Mumbai University and the Leader of the Indian team at ILO
  Time: 20 minutes
- **Organizer Talk 2**: Designing of (Computational) Linguistics Problems and Puzzles for School Children
  Speaker: Monojit Choudhury, Microsoft Research Lab India
  Time: 20 minutes
- **Organizer Talk 3**: Scaling up the reach and topical coverage of Linguistic Olympiad in India
  Speaker: Shireen Irani, Department of Linguistics, EFLU, Hyderabad.
  Time: 20 minutes
- **Invited Talk 1**: State of Linguistic Education in schools and potential for development
  Speaker: TBD, Time: 30 minutes
- **Invited Talk 2**: Experiences in teaching Computational Linguistics at Undergrad level – need for linguistic orientation at an early age.
  Speaker: TBD, Time: 30 minutes
- **Panel Discussion**: Promoting linguistics at school and undergrad levels in the country: The need and the means
  Panelists: TBD, Time: 60 minutes
- **Open Discussion**: 30 minutes – 60 minutes

Tentative List of Invitees

All the regional coordinators:	*Other Invitees*:
Ms. Kalika Bali, Microsoft Research	Prof Ramakant Agnihotri, Delhi University (Retired)
Prof Anupam Basu, IIT Kharagpur	Dr. Karunesh Arora, CDAC Noida
Prof Sandipan Dandapat, IIT Guwahati	Prof Sivaji Bandyopadhyay, Jadavpur University
Prof Indranil Dutta, EFLU	Prof Pushpak Bhattacharyya, IIT Bombay
Ms. Shirin Irani, University of Hyderabad	Prof Probal Dasgupta, Hyderabad Central University
Prof Girish Nath Jha, JNU	Prof Asif Iqbal, IIT Patna
Dr. A. Kumaran, Microsoft Research	Dr. Mitesh Khapra, IBM Research Lab
Prof Shakuntala Mahanta, IIT Guwahati	Prof Awadesh Kumar Mishra, CIIL Mysore
Dr. Sibansu Mukherjee, SNLTR Kolkata	Prof Dipti Mishra Sharma, IIIT Hyderabad
Ms. Zarana Sarda, Mumbai University	Prof Rajeev Sangal, IIT BHU
	Prof Sudeshna Sarkar, IIT Kharagpur
	Prof L. Shobha, AU-KBC

Organizers

Monojit Choudhury

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Dr. Monojit Choudhury is a researcher at Microsoft Research Lab India since 2007, and is actively involved in research, teaching and organizational activities in the areas of Natural Language Processing, Information Retrieval, Cognition and Complexity Science. He has more than 50 research publications in reputed journals and conferences. He served as the PC member of several conferences and has experience in conducting several workshops and tutorials in the area of NLP, including TextGraphs-3 and TextGraphs-4: Graph-based Algorithms in NLP held in conjunction with Coling 2008 and ACL 2009; Named Entity Workshop (NEWS) held in conjunction with ACL-IJCNLP 2009; Workshop on South and South East Asian NLP in conjunction with Coling 2010; Workshop on Dynamics on and of Complex Networks in conjunction with European Conference in Complex Systems 2010, Lisbon; Second Workshop on Advances in Input Methods in conjunction with Coling 2012. Dr. Choudhury was actively involved in teaching and problem design during the Orientation cum Selection Camp for the Panini Linguistics Olympiad 2013.

Avinash Pandey

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&
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Dr. Avinash Pandey is an assistant professor in Department of linguistics in the University of Mumbai. He has initiated the Panini Linguistics Olympiad as an outreach program in the year 2012-13. Besides conducting the Panini Linguistics Olympiad at the national level, he also conducted basic workshops as well as the orientation cum selection workshop for the program. He is involved in several research projects including development of a pronunciation lexicon for Marathi. The project is conducted in collaboration with TIFR, Mumbai and centrally coordinated by C-DAC, Kolkata.