hcid

Alberto Samaniego
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Human-Computer Interaction Design Program
School of Informatics & Computing
Indiana University at Bloomington

Advisors of Record
• Eli Blevis, Associate Professor of Informatics, Director of the HCI/d Program, Instructor of Record
• Yue Pan, Associate Instructor
• David Roedl, Associate Instructor

Core HCI/d Faculty Advisors
• Jeff Bardzell, Associate Professor of Informatics
• Shaowen Bardzell, Associate Professor of Informatics
• Marty Siegel, Professor of Informatics
• Erik Stolterman, Professor of Informatics

Language Activism: Reinforcing the Presence of Guarani Language in Digital Contexts in Paraguay

Predispositions

Guarani as part of Paraguayan culture - Guarani language is a central part of Paraguayan culture.

Current standing of Guarani - In order to gain the same standing as Spanish, Guarani needs to take place in new contexts such as academia and government.

Bilingualism in Paraguay - It is important to foster bilingualism in Paraguay as both Spanish and Guarani are official languages of the country and play key roles in Paraguayan's idiosyncrasy.

Digital presence of Guarani - It is imperative to foster the presence of Guarani in digital contexts, especially on the Internet.

Research

Language demographics - By 2002, 10% of them were monolingual in Spanish, 25% were monolingual in Guarani and 51% were bilingual in Spanish and Guarani.

One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) in Paraguay - Since 2008 more than 9700 children and 350 teachers have been included in the OLPC project. However, most applications children use are in Spanish, and the platform present difficulties to support Guarani.

Guarani activism - There is a big community of Guarani activists in Paraguay. Activists are strong supporters of increasing the presence of Guarani in written and digital contexts.

Insights

Insights pointed out opportunities of using digital technologies to support Guarani in four different ways: activism, learning of the language, education and daily life situations.

Some key insights that resulted from predispositions and research are the following: written Guarani needs to be supported by digital technologies; there is a need for more written resources in Guarani; the Internet can be used as a means for Guarani activism; crowdsourcing can be used to collaboratively translate Guarani; there is an opportunity to reinforce the presence of Guarani in public spaces.

Concepts & Concept Systems

Research and insights led to near 30 concepts targeted to four different user groups: Guarani activists, Guarani students, children immersed in the OLPC program, and general Paraguayan population. Following are some of concepts that emerged:

Sharing and collaborative translation of documents in Guarani
This is a concept system that consists on a document repository where documents in Spanish and/or Guarani are uploaded and shared. Crowdsourcing is used to collaboratively translate the documents by assigning short translation tasks to different users.
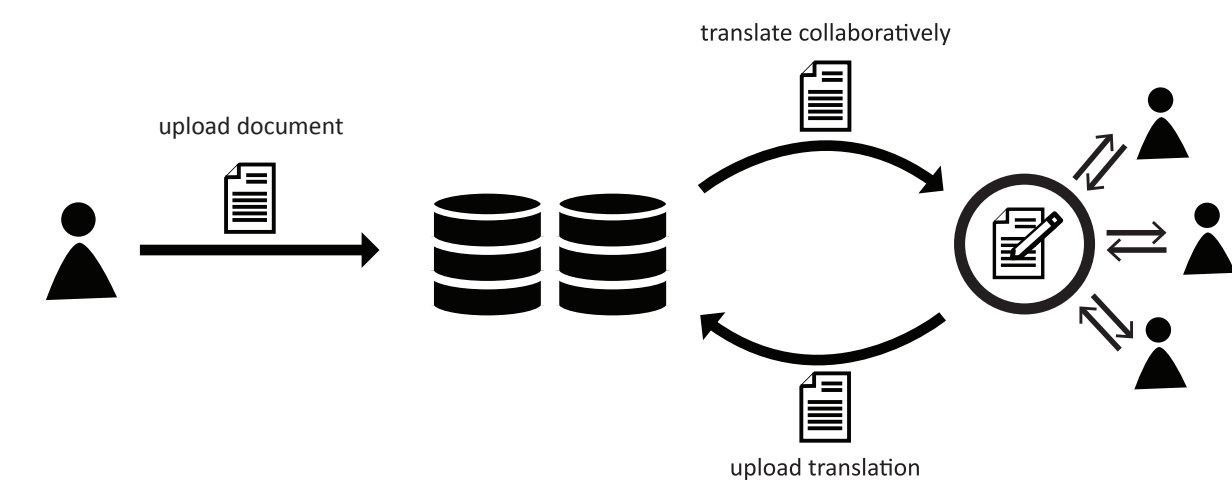

Reading aloud Recorder for XOs
This XO application presents kids an assignment consisting of a text on the screen to be read aloud. Kids record their voice while reading and submit the assignment via the Internet or the XO mesh network.

Voice-operated Dictionary for Guarani
A Spanish-Guarani/Guarani-Spanish dictionary app with speech recognition for both languages. The user would say out loud the word she wants to translate and the dictionary will speak the translated word. The dictionary can also include morphological analysis.
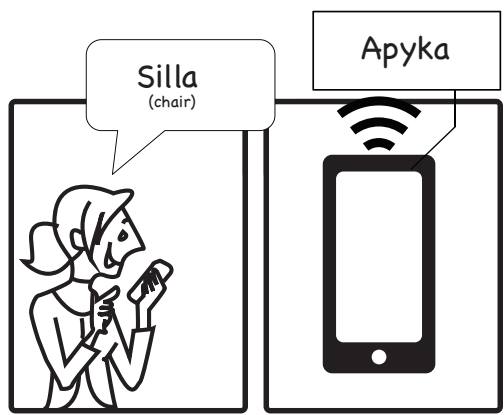
Strategies

This project was a first exploration on designing for the Guarani language. The aim of this project was to discover ways in which design could be used to reinforce the presence of Guarani in digital contexts in Paraguay.

Future directions include exploring in depth design opportunities for Guarani activism, designing for learning of Guarani, designing for Guarani in basic education and designing for maintaining and revitalizing Paraguayan culture through the Guarani language.

Guarani Activists | Guarani Students | OLPC Children | General Population