SANTIAGO GÓNGORA

PhD. Student

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📍 Montevideo, Uruguay

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

I am a PhD student at Universidad de la República (Uruguay). My research lines build on those explored in my Master's thesis, where, under the supervision of Dr. Luis Chiruzzo (Uruguay) and Dr. Gonzalo Méndez (Spain), I worked on modeling some of the mechanisms that human Game Masters need to run a classical Tabletop Role-playing Game. Currently, among the many Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Computational Creativity problems to face, I am mainly focused on keeping the fictional word coherent after the actions taken by the players.

I also work as a teaching and research assistant at Universidad de la República (Uruguay). Specifically, I am a member of the NLP research group at Facultad de Ingeniería. Besides the main research topic for my thesis, I am also interested in the application of NLP in education and in Machine Translation for Low-resource languages. For my Bachelor's thesis I worked on boosting the performance for Spanish-Guarani machine translation using static word embeddings.

EXPERIENCE

Teaching & Research assistant

Universidad de la República

📅 Jan 2020 – Present   📍 Uruguay

As a member of the Natural Language Processing research group (GrupoPLN), I have collaborated in different activities, which I detail next.

- **Machine Translation for Low-resource languages**. For my Bachelor's thesis, I worked on enhancing Guarani-Spanish Machine Translation, publishing two papers in *ACL workshops. Later, we built the Jojajovai parallel corpus, presented at LREC2022. Recently, we developed a strategy to boost Neural Machine Translation for low-resource languages using grammar-generated text. The paper reporting this method obtained the *Theme track award* at NAACL2024.

- **NLP in educational video games**. We are working with English and school teachers in an interdisciplinary project. The main objective is to design educational games that rely on NLP technologies, as a way to enhance interactivity for English teaching. We described the project in this paper.

- **Organization of shared tasks**: I was part of the organization team for some shared tasks at the Iberian Languages Evaluation Forum, on Factuality of events (2020), Computational humor (2021), Question Answering (2022), and Guarani-Spanish code-switching in texts (2023).

- **Member of the Iberamia2024 organizing committee**. This year, we are hosting Iberamia in Montevideo, Uruguay. I am helping to organize an NLP workshop and to keep the website up to date.

I also work as an assistant for lectures and practical classes. So far, the courses I have participated in are *Introduction to Natural Language Processing*, *Formal language theory*, and *Introduction to Databases*.

EDUCATION

MSc. Computer Science

Universidad de la República (Uruguay)

📅 2025

Thesis: "Approaches to interactive and improvisational storytelling "
Topics: *Interactive Storytelling*, *Computational Creativity*, *Natural Language Processing*
Advisors: Luis Chiruzzo & Gonzalo Méndez

B.E. Computer Science

Universidad de la República (Uruguay)

📅 2022

Thesis: "Construcción de Recursos para la Traducción Automática Guaraní-Español" (*Resource building for Guarani-Spanish Machine Translation*)
Topics: *Machine Translation*, *Lexical semantics*
Advisor: Luis Chiruzzo
★ **Academia Nacional de Ingeniería del Uruguay** (*National Academy of Engineering*) **best C.S. thesis award**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Agustín Lucas, Alexis Baladón, Victoria Pardiñas, Marvin Agüero-Torales, S.Góngora and L.Chiruzzo (2024). "Grammar-based Data Augmentation for Low-Resource Languages: The Case of Guarani-Spanish Neural Machine Translation".
★ **NAACL2024 Theme track paper award**

- S.Góngora, L.Chiruzzo, G.Méndez, P.Gervás (2024)."PAYADOR: A Minimalist Approach to Grounding Language Models on Structured Data for Interactive Storytelling and Role-playing Games"

- S.Góngora, L.Chiruzzo, G.Méndez, P.Gervás (2023)."Skill Check: Some Considerations on the Evaluation of Gamemastering Models for Role-Playing Games"

- L.Chiruzzo, S.Góngora, A.Alvarez, G.Giménez-Lugo, M.Agüero-Torales, Y.Rodrıguez (2022). "Jojajovai: A Parallel Guarani-Spanish Corpus for MT Benchmarking"

- L.Chiruzzo, S.Castro, S.Góngora, A.Rosá, JA.Meaney, R.Mihalcea (2021). "Overview of HAHA at IberLEF 2021: Detecting, Rating and Analyzing Humor in Spanish"

For the full list, please check my Google Scholar page.

LANGUAGES

Spanish	*Native*
English	*Proficient*
Galician	*Intermediate*