

SSWL soul-searching

Database Workshop
NYU, Nov 9, 2007
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Outline

- Big issues: On conflicting urges in database construction
- A small-scale attempt: Variation in Control Structures

Conflicting theoretical positions

- Languages are underlying alike, and what we are after is the degree of sameness
- Languages differ in a number of (unconstrained/less constrained) ways, and what we are after is the degree of difference

Conflicting assumptions

- Phenomena are the same unless proven otherwise
- Phenomena are different unless (if ever) proven otherwise

Irreconcilable urges?

- *The Christopher Columbus school of thought:*
Get as much data as fast as possible
and decide what to do with it later
- *The Lawrence of Arabia school of thought:*
Get rigorously analyzed data, slowly, in
addressing specific questions

Existing databases

- *Christopher Columbus databases and corpora:*
CHILDES, APiCs, Heritage Language
database
- *Lawrence of Arabia databases:*
Aphranaph, DP Structure (Trieste), Control

Conflicting goals of a database

Your database is...

- Starting point leading to references, data,
hypotheses
 - or just a small corpus...
- Generalization(s) on linguistic phenomena
- Explanation(s) for generalization

Variation in control structures

<http://accent.ucsd.edu/>