

Preface: Program Committee Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Program Committee, we are pleased to present you with this volume, containing the papers accepted for presentation at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics and the 10th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics. This second joint meeting of the American and European chapters of the Association for Computational Linguistics is being held July 6-11, 2001, in Toulouse, France. The program of the meeting also includes a wealth of high-quality tutorials, workshops, panels and invited talks, all on a wide range of topics related to natural language processing.

This year, 260 papers from 33 countries were submitted for the main program of the meeting, and 68 papers were selected for presentation. With an acceptance rate of 26%, this meeting is one of the most selective international conferences of the year 2001. Among the accepted papers, 30 come from the American Zone (44.1%), 31 come from the European-African Zone (45.6%) and 7 come from the Asian-Pacific Zone (10.3%). The accepted papers have been contributed by authors from 14 different countries. Overall, the accepted papers provide an exciting and up-to-date sample of the best work in this field at the present time.

Selection of the papers for the main program was not an easy task. The 9 Area Chairs and the 211 reviewers from 25 countries can not be thanked enough for their conscientious and careful efforts. All those who contributed are named in the following pages, but we would like to especially express our thanks to the 9 Area Chairs: Jennifer Chu-Carroll, Joshua Goodman, Pierre Isabelle, Adam Kilgarriff, Lillian Lee, Adwait Ratnaparkhi, Ehud Reiter, James Rogers and David Weir. Papers received blind review. The Area Chairs, along with the Program Committee co-Chairs then spent two intensive days in Brighton, UK, making the final decisions. Many thanks are due to Donia Scott for agreeing to host the Program Committee meeting at ITRI in Brighton and for her support, and to Adam Kilgarriff and David Weir who helped with the organization of this event.

This year the main program of the conference takes place on three days. Therefore, the technical program consists of three parallel tracks, each divided into several sessions. Three sessions have been reserved for the student papers.

For the first time this year, one or more papers specially selected by the Program Committee out of the main program will be assigned a best-paper award. Our especial thanks go to the *Artificial Intelligence Journal* and its publisher, Elsevier, for promoting and sponsoring the award.

In addition to the technical program, we are honored to have as invited speakers such internationally recognized researchers as Richard Durbin (The Sanger Centre, UK) and Jean-Luc Gauvain (LIMSI-CNRS, France). We would like to extend our special thanks to them for having kindly agreed to present their unique perspectives at the meeting. We thank Donia Scott for organizing the panel “Directions for strategic funding for CL” and thank the panel chair Hans Uszkoreit and the panelists Akira Kubota, Joseph Mariani, John Prange, Bernd Reuse and Giovanni Varile for their participation. We also thank Bonnie Webber for organizing the panel “Language Entrepreneurship”, and also thank the panel chair Steven Krauwer and the panelists Tanya Korelsky, Robert Moore, Bernard Normier and Yves Shabes for their participation.

Pulling together a meeting of such a large scale is a major effort, and thanks are due to several people for making it happen. Special thanks are due to the General Chair, Bonnie Webber, and to the Local Arrangements Chair, Patrick Saint-Dizier, for their support, suggestions and for attending to our numerous requests. Many thanks are also due to the Local Arrangements Committee.

We would like to thank the Publication Chair Roberto Zamparelli, along with Nicola Benaglia, for their help in the preparation of the proceedings. In addition, they both coordinated the production of the

companion volume and the CD-ROM version of the proceedings. We are also very grateful to David Yarowsky and Radu Florian for their help with the preparation of the proceedings, their set up of the PDF submission interface, as well as for providing us with the program that significantly aided in the reviewers assignment process.

The suggestions and guidance from the ACL Executive Committee members on various items were really indispensable. Also, we constantly relied upon the experience and advice of Kathleen McCoy, ACL Secretary-Treasurer, Priscilla Rasmussen, ACL Business Manager, and both the present and past presidents of ACL, Eduard Hovy and Wolfgang Wahlster. We could not have managed without the help of these people. Many thanks are also due to K. Vijay-Shanker, whose experience as Program Committee co-Chair of ACL-2000 was very valuable to us, to Yaser Al-Onaizan and to John Chen who provided the scripts that were used to process the electronic notification and the incoming review forms.

A very special thank is deserved to Christina Schorr, Norbert Reithinger's assistant at DFKI, for her invaluable support in handling all details of organizing such a conference – from handling the submissions and constructing the submission data-base to checking the proper format of the final papers. Many thanks also to Andrea Placzkova for her help in this process. We also wish to express our thanks to the following other people who helped with the computing facilities that were used at DFKI GmbH: Silke Kessler, Markus Bolz and Robert Wirth.

Benvenuti, Bienvenidos, Bienvenue, Willkommen, and Welcome to ACL-2001.

Norbert Reithinger and Giorgio Satta

Program Committee Co-Chairs

May 2001