

20th  
Annual Meeting  
of the  
Association for  
Computational Linguistics



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## PREFACE

These proceedings contain both the papers that were contributed to the 20th annual meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics and the position papers from the invited panelists. It has become traditional for the ACL meeting to present material all along the spectrum of applied and theoretical work; this meeting is no exception. The topic areas include computational semantics, knowledge representation, data base interfaces, language generation, acquisition of syntactic rules, and the understanding of ungrammatical (or otherwise non-standard) input. This great breadth illustrates how much the field has grown in the two decades of ACL's existence.

To celebrate the beginning of our third decade, this year's program includes a panel composed of past presidents of the ACL; it is hoped that their reflections will provide a perspective from which the future can be viewed realistically but with optimism. Two other panels touch upon one of the current "hot topics" in computational linguistics (natural language interfaces to data bases) and one of the areas we anticipate will become "hot" in the very near future (non-normative systems). The panel chairmen, Don Walker, Bob Moore, and Mitch Marcus, are to be commended on their selection of panelists and on their formulation of the issues the panelists will address.

The Program Committee consisted of Madeleine Bates (Bolt Beranek and Newman), Jonathan Allen (MIT), Robert Berwick (MIT), Barbara Grosz (SRI International), Chris Riesbeck (Yale), and Stuart Shapiro (SUNY Buffalo). The committee evaluated 43 papers that were submitted to the conference. The selection of a final program is always a difficult process, but we believe that this year's program continues the ACL's tradition of excellence. Special thanks go to all those who submitted papers to the conference.

The continuing success of our meetings is due to the effort of numerous volunteers who accept responsibilities and discharge them with good will. In particular, this year, Ray Perrault managed the local arrangements for the meeting, Don Walker saw to it that the call for papers, the program announcement, and the proceedings all got produced and distributed (no small task!), and Jane Robinson kept everything under control.

Madeleine Bates  
Program Chair



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