FSMNLP'98

Proceedings of the International Workshop on Finite State Methods in Natural Language Processing

Edited by
Lauri Karttunen
Kemal Oflazer

June 30 - July 1, 1998

Bilkent University
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PREFACE

Recent years has seen a substantial increase in the use of finite state techniques in many aspects of natural language processing as mature tools for building large scale finite-state systems from various research laboratories and universities become available. This trend was by no means foreseen as late as ten years ago given the well-known demonstration by Noam Chomsky in 1957 that finite-state methods are inherently incapable of representing the full richness of constructions in a natural language. Nevertheless, it is evident now that there are many subsets of natural langugage that are adequately covered by finite-state means and that there are many other areas where finite-state approximations of more powerful formalisms are of great practical benefit. The discovery that systems of phonological rewrite rules and optimality contraints are within the finite-state domain has made an important theoretical leap forward. We expect that similar discoveries are yet to be made in other areas of linguistics.

FSMNLP'98, International Workshop on Finite State Methods in Natural Language Processing was conceived, with support and motivation from EACL, as a forum to bring together recent contributions in all aspects of the theory and applications of finite state machinery in language processing. As you may have already observed by reviewing the workshop programme and by looking at the papers to be presented, the mix of the contributions is international and shows wide-spread interest in this technology. They range over a variety of topics of great interest to the NLP community.

We thank members of the Programme Committee who, with their prompt and dedicated reviews of the submissions, enabled us to select the contributions for these proceedings. We thank Bilkent University for providing the facilities and contributing to the logistics of the workshop. We also thank the NATO Science for Stability Programme (Phase III) which let us use funds from the TU-LANGUAGE Project, and TBITAK, the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council, for additional financial support. Last but not least, we thank Professor Bülent Özgüç, Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, for his help in designing the cover and in the production of the proceedings.

We hope you enjoy the workshop.

Lauri Karttunen and Kemal Oflazer

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