Preface to the CLiC-it 2023 Proceedings

Federico Boschetti[1,2], Gianluca E. Lebani[2], Bernardo Magnini[3] and Nicole Novielli[4]

[1]*CNR-Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli", Pisa*

[2]*Ca' Foscari University of Venice*

[3]*Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento*

[4]*University of Bari "Aldo Moro"*

The ninth edition of the Italian Conference on Computational Linguistics (CLiC-it 2023) was held from 30th November to 2nd December 2023 at **Ca' Foscari University of Venice**, in the beautiful venue of the Auditorium Santa Margherita - Emanuele Severino. After the edition of 2020, which was organized in fully virtual mode due to the health emergency related to Covid-19, and CLiC-it 2021, which was held in hybrid mode, with CLiC-it 2023 we are back to a fully in-presence conference. Overall, almost 210 participants registered to the conference, confirming that the community is eager to meet in person and to enjoy both the scientific and social events together with the colleagues.

Concerning the scientific organization of the conference, there have been few important novelties proposed at CLiC-it 2023. First, we have introduced the **distinction between long and short papers**, with the aim of bringing CLiC-it closer to the standards of the major international conferences in the field. In total, we received 66 submissions for long papers and 20 submissions for short papers, for a total of 86 submissions. In addition we received 20 submissions for Research Communications, i.e., outstanding papers that have been already published during the last period in a major international CL conference or journal.

A second novelty of the conference concerns **the reviewing process**. Instead of having conference tracks, as in previous CLiC-it editions, we just listed a large number of topics to be used at submission time, and then submissions were assigned to area chairs (twelve program committee members) through a bidding mechanisms. This way we were able to achieve a better balance of papers for each area chair, while respecting their research interests. Then, assignment to reviewers was also managed globally, instead of separately for each area. We had a single pool of reviewers, which allowed to better monitoring the whole process, including good per paper distribution of senior and young reviewers.

During the reviewing process, each submission was reviewed by three independent reviewers in single-blind fashion. At the end of the process, **75 proposals were accepted** for presentation at the conference and for publication in the proceedings, resulting in an acceptance rate of 87.21%.

Out of the 75 accepted proposals, 26 were included in the program of CLiC-it 2023 as oral presentations and the remaining 59 were assigned to one of the three poster sessions of the conference. As usual, the criterion for assigning a proposal to an oral or a poster session was based on the contents and not on the quality of the proposal. Regardless of the format of presentation, long papers are limited to seven pages of content (one additional page w.r.t. the previous editions) plus unlimited pages of references in the proceedings, available as open access publication.

The program of CLiC-it 2023 is completed by **20 research communications** selected after the reviewing process. Research communications are not published in the proceedings, but four of them have been orally presented within dedicated sessions at the conference, while the remaining 16 were presented in one of the three poster sessions of the Conference.

In addition to the technical programme, this year the conference was opened by a welcome speech by Rodolfo Del Monte titled "Computational Linguistics in Venice: when it all began", and we were honoured to have as **invited speakers** such internationally recognized researchers as:

- **David Bamman** (UC Berkeley), with a keynote entitled "The Promise and Peril of Large Language Models for Cultural Analytics": *Much work at the intersection of NLP and cultural analytics/computational social science is focused on creating new algorithmic measuring devices for constructs we see encoded in text (including agency, respect, and power, to name a few). How does the paradigm shift of large language models change this? In this talk, I'll discuss the role of LLMs (such as ChatGPT, GPT-4 and open alternatives) for research in cultural analytics, both raising issues*

about the use of closed models for scholarly inquiry and charting the opportunity that such models present. The rise of large pre-trained language models has the potential to radically transform the space of cultural analytics by both reducing the need for large-scale training data for new tasks and lowering the technical barrier to entry, but need care in establishing the reliability of results.

- **Vera Demberg** (Saarland University), with a keynote entitled "Pragmatic processing in humans and language models": *Pragmatic processing concerns inferences that go beyond the literal meaning of a text or utterance. In my talk, I will go through different types of pragmatic inferences, including scalar implicatures, atypicality inferences and other tasks requiring theory of mind reasoning; for each of these, I will discuss recent work from our lab and others, regarding the ability of large language models, and of humans, to handle these phenomena.*

On the last morning of the Conference, Danilo Croce and Claudiu Daniel Hromei (University of Rome, Tor Vergata) gave a **tutorial** on the state-of-the-art Large Language Models and how to instruction-tuned in a sustainable way.

This year we received 7 candidate theses for the "**Emanuele Pianta Award for the Best Master Thesis**". This special prize for the best Master Thesis (Laurea Magistrale) in Computational Linguistics, submitted at an Italian University, is endorsed by AILC. The candidate theses have been evaluated by a jury composed by Pierpaolo Basile (University of Bari "Aldo Moro"), Gianluca E. Lebani (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) and Viviana Patti (University of Turin). The winner was awarded during the closing session of the conference by the members of the jury.

We thank **all the people and institutions** involved in the organization of the conference, all area chairs, reviewers, and all participants, who contributed to the success of the event. All area chairs and reviewers are named in the following pages. We are grateful to the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities[1], that made CLiC-it 2023 possible by hosting the event and supporting us greatly in the processes of local organization, and to the organizations that endorsed our event: the Italian Association of Digital Humanities [2], the European Centre for Living Technology hosted by Ca' Foscari[3] and the Future Artificial Intelligence Research Foundation[4].

We would like to thank our **supporters**, who generously provided funds and services that are crucial

for the realization of this event: Talia[5] (Platinum), Almawave[6] and Aptus.AI[7] (Gold), aecqua.tech and trnslated [8] (Bronze) and the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice [9].

Finally, we want to thank very much the Associazione Italiana di Linguistica Computazionale (**AILC**), all the members of the Association Board and, in particular, the President Simonetta Montemagni and Elisabetta Fersini, who never let us alone in the sea of doubts and problems that organizing such an ever-changing event implies.

Venice, December 2023

Conference Chairs

- **Federico Boschetti**, CNR-Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli" / Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- **Gianluca E. Lebani**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- **Bernardo Magnini**, Fondazione Bruno Kessler
- **Nicole Novielli**, University of Bari "Aldo Moro"

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- **Cristina Procentese**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- **Matteo Radaelli**, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

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- **Sofia Brenna**, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

Booklet

- **Alice Suozzi**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Area Chairs

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- **Valerio Basile**, University of Turin
- **Tommaso Caselli**, Rijksuniveristeit Groningen
- **Danilo Croce**, University of Rome Tor Vergata
- **Francesco Cutugno**, University of Naples Federico II
- **Elisabetta Fersini**, University of Milano-Bicocca
- **Gloria Gagliardi**, University of Bologna
- **Elisabetta Jezek**, University of Pavia
- **Alessandro Lenci**, University of Pisa
- **Rachele Sprugnoli**, University of Parma
- **Sara Tonelli**, Fondazione Bruno Kessler
- **Giulia Venturi**, CNR-Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli"

Reviewers

Chiara Alzetta, Alessio Palmero Aprosio, Oscar Araque, Serena Auriemma, Francesco Barbieri, Mauro Bennici, Luisa Bentivogli, Andrea Bolioli, Helena Bonaldi, Giovanni Bonetta, Cristina Bosco, Sofia Brenna, Dominique Brunato, Davide Buscaldi, Elena Cabrio, Florian Cafiero, Jean-Baptiste Camps, Silvia Casola, Camilla Casula, Emmanuele Chersoni, Francesca Chiusaroli, Alessandra Teresa Cignarella, Fabio Ciotti, Claudia Roberta Combei, Gianpaolo Coro, Riccardo Del Gratta, Angelo Mario Del Grosso, Felice Dell'Orletta, Maria Di Maro, Marcello Ferro, Komal Florio, Greta Hayley Franzini, Simona Frenda, Francesca Frontini, Marco Gaido, Lorenzo Gregori, Claudiu Daniel Hromei, Anas Fahad Khan, Tiziano Labruna, Alberto Lavelli, Eleonora Litta, Simone Magnolini, Francesco Mambrini, Alessio Miaschi, Martina Miliani, Monica Monachini, Johanna Monti, Debora Nozza, Antonio Origlia, Lucia Passaro, Marco Carlo Passarotti, Viviana Patti, Matteo Pellegrini, Marco Polignano, Simone Paolo Ponzetto, Giulia Rambelli, Alan Ramponi, Irene Russo, Manuela Sanguinetti, Giovanni Semeraro, Lucia Siciliani, Claudia Soria, Manuela Speranza, Carlo Strapparava, Olga Uryupina, Serena Villata, Vincenzo Norman Vitale, Andrea Zaninello