

Acknowledgments

Dear readers,

This is the Proceedings of the 7th Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing, and it is the fourteenth event organized under the auspices of SIGDAT, the ACL Special Interest Group for linguistic data and corpus-based approaches to NLP. We received 142 submissions, more than double the number from last year, and equivalent in size to full ACL conferences before 1997. Out of those, 35 have been accepted for presentation (that is, 24.6% of the submissions), and six more have been selected for inclusion in the proceedings as reserve papers (for a total “printed” acceptance rate of 28.9%). Nevertheless, in order to allow for a minimal reasonable time for paper presentation (25 minutes, same as last year), we had to schedule two blocks of parallel sessions, and even slightly longer days.

The papers submitted reflected a wide range of interests of the “empirical” NLP community. There were no specific areas, but as usual, several topics have been suggested on the original call for papers. Potential authors were encouraged to send in papers that deviated from the mainstream in a substantial way, in order to target the “next big thing” in NLP. From today’s (pre-conference) perspective, however, the “next big thing” has not happened (only one paper has been marked by a reviewer as having the potential); but ultimately, it will be up to you all to see if any of this year’s papers will in the future match the glory of the well-known breakthrough references like the Church’s 1988 tagging paper, the Yarowsky’s WSD papers from the mid-90s, or Collins’ lexicalized-parser papers from the late 90s.

The papers have been doubly blind reviewed by a panel of 53 reviewers, some of them recruited at the last moment as we have been seeing the pile of submissions grow beyond our wildest expectations. Despite that, and contrary to our promise, the reviewers had often to review more than 5 papers, and some got more than 10. Final decisions have been made by us for the papers from the gray zone. Respecting the reviews as much as possible, we have been looking more at the prose of the comments than the numbers. We can only hope that the final selection will please you, the readers, and not make the authors of the rejected papers too angry. In any case, we would like to thank all of our reviewers for their hard work, and especially to those who have provided useful comments; special appreciation goes to those who have reviewed for us on a very short notice. Of course, the blame for any unfortunate selections is on us...

Thanks go especially to David Yarowsky, who put together the final volume of proceedings, to Dragomir Radev for supervising the publication (not only for EMNLP, of course), to Walter Daelemans, the Workshops chair this year, to Lillian Lee, the previous program committee chair, whose EMNLP-01 web pages and the list of reviewers were of great help to us, to the organizers of this year’s anniversary ACL and EMNLP in Philadelphia, and, of course, to Priscilla Rasmussen, the ACL Business Manager, who manages it all.

Finally, we would like to thank David Yarowsky again for his help throughout the whole process. We have really appreciated his advice and help, especially in the moments when crucial decisions had to be made due to the unanticipated large size of this event. Of course, we were all very pleased with the number of submissions we got, and we would certainly wish to the next Program Chair(s) to see double the number of submissions again :-)!

May we wish you all an interesting and mind-provoking event!

Jan Hajič
Yuji Matsumoto

Prague, May 2002