

Preface

The computational linguistics and language technology communities in the Nordic and Baltic countries have always considered the NODALIDA conference as one of the important events for meeting and interchanging new research in the field. Through the establishment of the Northern European Association of Language Technology (NEALT) in 2006, the NODALIDA conference has increased its importance and is now recognized outside the Nordic regions, as can be seen by the fact that we have received several European submissions from outside the Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as submissions from outside Europe such as the US, India, and Pakistan. We are very pleased to hereby present the Proceedings of NODALIDA 2011, the 18th Nordic Conference of Computational Linguistics, held 11-13 May 2011 in Riga, Latvia. We hope that these proceedings will serve as a useful and comprehensive repository of information, will facilitate research in language technology and will encourage the development of further language resources for the Nordic and Baltic languages!

According to the reviews provided by the review committee, a vast majority of the papers submitted for the conference this year were of very good quality. This is a positive sign of the fact that language technology in the Nordic and Baltic countries is striving. However, maintaining the tradition of the NODALIDA conference running over two days plus a workshop day, time scarcity has enforced us to accept only a limited number of papers. This means that even with an acceptance rate above 60%, several quality papers have been rejected. To sum up in figures, we received altogether 85 submissions from 20 countries in the four categories of full papers, short /demo papers, student papers, and workshops. Each submission received three reviews and borderline cases were further subjected to discussion among the Program Committee members. For the conference, we have accepted 52 papers which appear in these proceedings, as well as three workshops which will produce their own proceedings. Of the accepted papers in the main conference, 33 are long papers presented as talk or poster, 14 are short papers presented as poster or demo and five are student papers of which three are presented as talk and two as poster. It should be pointed out that most of the submissions are from the Nordic countries and only a limited number of papers are from the Baltic region. This may be because the Baltic HLT conference was held only recently. The papers selected for the conference represent a wide range of topics of research, including corpus linguistics, lexicography, morphological and syntactic processing, machine translation, speech technologies, semantics, and other areas of language technology.

We also have the pleasure of presenting three invited speakers at NODALIDA 2011, one of which is invited to present ongoing research in the host country, Latvia, and two others to present ongoing research in Sweden and Scotland, respectively. The invited talks concern central aspects of language technology such as discourse analysis, dependency parsing, and controlled natural languages. Bonnie Webber from University of Edinburgh talks about discourse structures and language technology and discusses how discourse structures can help to improve language technologies, and further, how language technologies can help to induce and model discourse structures. Joakim Nivre from Uppsala University gives a survey of recent advances in so-called bare-bones dependency parsing; focusing in particular on transition-based methods for highly efficient parsing. Guntis Bārzdiņš from University of Latvia talks about a new kind of rich controlled natural language which allows to narrow the gap with true natural language.

In addition, the conference program includes three workshops; two on the specialized topics terminology and Constraint Grammar, and one with the broader focus on visibility of language resources.

Moreover, the conference has attracted a satellite event, held before the workshops: The project-related meeting in META-NET/META-NORD which is the Nordic and Baltic branch of a Network of Excellence dedicated to building the technological foundations of a multilingual European information society. Finally, during the conference there will be the third NEALT business meeting.

The organization of a conference of this size is a joint effort between several organizational units. We would first like to thank our reviewers for their conscientious work in reviewing all the submitted contributions. We also wish to thank the Program Committee for inviting the reviewers as well as for the fruitful discussions regarding how to ensure a conference of high quality. A big thank you goes to the Local Organization Committee at the Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science of University of Latvia for their work concerning practical issues for the conference. Special thanks go to Mare Koit, Editor-in-Chief of the NEALT Publication Series at University of Tartu, for producing the electronic proceedings.

We wish you an inspiring conference!

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