Preface to the special issue: LREC 2012: state of the art in resource development and evaluation

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Published online: 22 November 2014
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This special issue of LRE includes extended versions of selected papers from the Eighth Language Resources and Evaluation Conference (LREC), held in Istanbul in May 2012. Paper selection was based on recommendations from members of the LREC Scientific Committee, who were asked to identify potential “best papers” during the reviewing process. The final selection was made by the LRE co-editors-in-chief, with the aim of putting together a special issue that represents the trends and topics of focus in the field.

Several of the issue's nine papers focus on multi-lingual resources, and in particular parallel resources, which are increasingly used in the field to improve tool performance and bootstrap resources for under-resourced languages. Evaluation and replicability, which have come to the forefront of the community's interest over the past two or three years, are also among the special issue's topics. Finally, several papers demonstrate the use of the “human-in-the-loop” for annotation and evaluation, another strategy that has gained recent attention as the benefits of merging fully automated and human-assisted methods become increasingly apparent. Although these do not exhaust the range of topics that were presented at LREC 2012, they provide a representative sample of current interests and methods in the field.

The creation and use of language resources has come of age over the past sixteen years since the first LREC in 1998 and the past nine years since the journal *Computers and the Humanities* was recast to become *LRE*. Every major conference in the field now either officially or unofficially recognizes the importance of this activity, which was not the case until as recently as 5–7 years ago. In contrast,

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evaluation that utilizes these resources has long been an acceptable topic in major conferences in computational linguistics, but in no venue do we see many (if any) papers addressing the evaluation *of the resources themselves* in terms of quality, usability, applicability to certain tasks, etc. As the major journal for language resource use and development, *LRE* hopes to foster publication of this sort of evaluation in order to promote consistency and “best practices” for resource creation and, most importantly, better validation and replicability of results. We see this as an important next step for the field, and we invite the community to engage in the work necessary to take this step. *LRE* will continue to be a major venue for publication of results for studies of this kind and those addressing all aspects of language resource creation, use, management, and evaluation.

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