

## Foreword

The link between rationalists and empirists, perhaps like that between *Yin* and *Yang*, has been at times a tenuous one, but in the study of language, the legitimacy of both is increasingly recognised and the need for mutual understanding, if not cross-fertilization, is readily seen in recent decades. This is especially so as advancement in technology has provided unprecedented opportunities for the testing of models by the former on the one hand, and for the exploration of newer and better means to obtain and utilize data by the latter on the other. Moreover, the emergence of the information super highway in the new era also necessitates the full exploitation of technology in minimizing language as a barrier to better communication.

The Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation (PACLIC) combines two traditions: the Asian Conference on Language, Information and Computation (ACLIC) and the Pacific Asia Conference on Formal and Computational Linguistics (PACFoCoL). These two traditions converged at Kyoto in 1994 when a joint conference was held there. It was also there that the two overlapping groups of researchers decided to consolidate the two traditions as one.

The name of the merged conference would be PACLIC and the longer history of ACLIC makes it necessary for us to number the 'first' PACLIC held in 1995 in Hong Kong the tenth, hence PACLIC10. ACLIC began more than a decade ago as a small forum providing an intimate occasion primarily for scholars working on formal linguistics in Japan and Korea to share the results of their research. The subsequent participation of scholars from Taiwan led to the first PACFoCoL held in 1993 in Taipei, where computational linguistics became a prominent additional theme. The involvement of researchers from Hong Kong and other places in 1993 and 1994 further widened the circle of participants.

Submissions for presentation at ACLIC and PACFoCoL were in the form of extended abstracts. Usually around twenty papers were accepted for presentation and many papers were published in proceedings.

This year there was a very good response to our call for extended abstracts. We tried our best to find the most suitable reviewers (at least two) for each submitted abstract. In the case of a number of papers, we went out of the Programme Committee for help with the anonymous review process.

Following the prompt response of many reviewers, we were faced with the difficult task of deciding whether we should really accept only around twenty long papers for presentation in plenary sessions and turn away a number of promising papers on the basis of the extended abstracts submitted. After careful consideration and consultation the decision was taken to go beyond tradition and schedule two quarter-day parallel sessions for short papers. This has had the net effect of allowing more papers to be presented. As a result, there are now all together 36 presentations at PACLIC10, out of more than 60 initial submissions.

The contributors are mainly from the Pacific Asia region — Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mainland China, Malaysia, Australia and Thailand. We have had submissions from other parts of the world — Europe and America. As a result we have researchers from England, France and Germany presenting their results at PACLIC10. Altogether the participants are drawn from twelve communities of scholars from all over the world.

A conference like PACLIC10 will of course have papers on formal syntax/semantics and language information engineering. We have papers on linguistic formalisms and model-theoretic-based semantics/pragmatics. We also have papers on corpus-based linguistic studies as well as works in various areas of general linguistics. On the computing side, we have papers on work involving stochastic and corpus-based methods. We have papers on various aspects of computational linguistics. We have also accepted a small number of papers on 'softer' areas such as computer-aided language learning, linguistic information processing and multilingual computing, which are to many people the real meeting points of language and the computer. It may be observed that papers presented at PACLIC10 reflect a trend towards using more numerical methods, but discrete approaches remain a main stay.

The keynote speaker at the conference, Professor William S.-Y. Wang, the first holder of a Chair in Language Engineering in Asia, and probably anywhere in the world, introduces yet a new approach to the computational modeling of language — in the computation of historical affinity of languages.

The organizers are pleased that the papers accepted on the basis of the extended abstracts have been made available as full papers in this volume prior to the conference. Soft copies of many of these papers have also been put on the WEB at <http://ctwww.cityu.edu.hk/>.

The order of papers in this volume generally follows that in the programme, and the sequence in the Table of Contents is indicated by the number within square brackets after each paper in the programme.

Benjamin K. T'sou  
Tom B. Y. Lai