Editorial from the New Editor-in-Chief: the Era of Natural Language Processing Innovations on Asian and Low-Resource Languages

This issue marks almost six months of my term as the editor-in-chief (EiC) of the *ACM Transactions on Asian and Low-Resource Language Information Processing (TALLIP)*, and I am honored to write this editorial. I would like to start by thanking the previous EiCs Nianwen Xue, Richard Sproat, and Ng Hwee Tou for growing the journal to its current form and for passing me an already strong journal. I am honored to be working with talented people such as Wassim El Hajj, the information director, Arriane Bustillo, previous assistant to *TALLIP* EiC, Jose Mari Arenas, assistants to *TALLIP* EiC, Laura Lander, the journals manager, and the wonderful team of associate editors. Also, I would like to thank the editorial board members, reviewers, and authors for their efforts in guaranteeing the good quality of the published articles.

For the past 20+ years, throughout my career as a scientist, I have always been interested in working on Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology, particularly on areas related to languages with limited NLP resources. I have been involved in different ways with *TALLIP* from its early stage, as a reader, author, reviewer, and associate editor. I am grateful to be part of the team that is observing the transformation of this journal. This started from the time where this journal was called *ACM Transactions on Asian Language Information Processing (TALIP)*, focusing on Asian languages such as Arabic, Farsi, and Indian languages as well as East-Asian languages including Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. *TALLIP* is now extended to also reach other natural languages where NLP resources are limited. This includes the native languages of Africa, Australasia-Oceania, and the Americas.

In recent years, we observed an incredible amount of innovations and applications in the areas of NLP and artificial intelligence (AI). Examples include reaching human parity with automatic speech recognition as well as machine translation for some language pairs. We also observed a noticeable progress in information retrieval and natural language understanding applied to areas such as search and digital assistants. This is to name just a few. Innovations in this area of research have been more important than ever. It increased tremendously the interest in research and development in this field, whether that is in academia or in the industry. Current state-of-the-art techniques are shown to perform relatively well when enough NLP resources are available, such as English, where we reached human parity for speech recognition. For other languages with limited NLP resources, more efforts and innovations are required. This could be accomplished in several ways, including providing more NLP resources, enabling new technologies specific to target languages or benefit from approaches applied to rich resource languages to transfer knowledge to those with limited resources. All this makes the core topics of this journal essential,

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especially in this new era of AI when dealing with languages with limited NLP resources. We have an opportunity with *TALLIP* to make publication in the area of information processing for languages with low-resource even better by having a great technical program committee providing quality review and encouraging scientists to submit novel contributions.

I have witnessed the efforts of the *TALLIP* leadership committee since the early days of the journal. I will continue on these efforts with the editorial board to maintain and improve the diversity of submission and publication areas, encouraging continuation of publications in NLP for Asian and low-resource languages. Also, I will extend the scope of the journal to upcoming areas, such as multimodal AI and its applications, for which language processing forms the foundations. Diversity and inclusion are fundamental and at the core of my priorities when serving *TALLIP*. I plan to work with the editorial board on improving the diversity of the authors, reviewers, the editorial board itself, and hopefully the readers. My goal is to connect and create opportunities between scientists and engineers across and within the community. These great minds would include people from the current and new generation as well as those with diverse backgrounds such as gender, age, ethnicity, and geographic location.

Another area of interest would be to work on improving the impact factor for *TALLIP*. Even though there is no need to be obsessed by the impact factor, as *TALLIP* will continue to be the source of information a reader needs to find good quality work in this research topic, one could argue that impact factor is still one of the main indicators of having a pioneering journal. This is particularly important in an era where the excitement around NLP and AI led to an overwhelming increase on the number of submitted papers where the quality is not often ensured and plagiarism increased, leaving the load to deal with this to all of us, scientists and engineers. Previous EiCs and other journals explored several approaches that positively contributed to the increase of impact factor. Examples include a coordination with NLP conferences to enforce keywords in the published articles, so the citations in these conference papers are also counted towards impact factor. Also, we could coordinate with top workshops in our area to make them more connected and to increase good-quality paper submissions to *TALLIP*. These are few of the many possibilities, and I am looking forward to working with the editorial board of *TALLIP* to continue increasing the *TALLIP* impact factor. Also, one of my goals for *TALLIP* would be to reduce the time to decide on submissions to a reasonable time of around two months.

I am always open to listening to suggestions that improve the quality of *TALLIP* and to make it a pioneering journal in the field of information processing for Asian and low-resource languages. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or suggestions for improvement. I am looking forward to working with all of the community to grow our transactions to new high.

Imed Zitouni

Editor-in-Chief