

Preface

Welcome to the CCIS proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Arabic Language Processing – ICALP 2017. The conference was hosted in the imperial city Fez, Morocco, and organized by the Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University, National School of Applied Sciences (ENSA-USMBA) in collaboration with the Arabic Language Engineering Society in Morocco (ALESM).

ICALP (ex-CITALA) started in 2006 and is held every two years. It is the flagship conference of the Arabic Language Engineering Society in Morocco (ALESM), which is the largest Arabic NLP institute in Morocco.

ICALP (ex-CITALA) is one of the premier international forums for disseminating new scholarly and technological work in Arabic computational linguistics; it has become one of the leading international conferences in the field of Arabic language processing and related applications. Each ICALP (ex-CITALA) conference attracts more authors from different countries in different continents thanks to the success of the preceding editions.

ICALP 2017 (ex-CITALA) provided excellent opportunities for scientists, researchers, industrial engineers, and university students to present their research achievements and to develop new collaborations and partnerships with experts in the field.

In this notable edition, we were indeed privileged to have had not one but two esteemed speakers. Our distinguished speakers were Dr. Khalid Choukri (ELRA Secretary General, ELDA founder, and CEO Evaluations and Language Resources Distribution Agency; ELDA), representing industry, and Prof. Allan Ramsay from Manchester University, UK, representing academia.

The keynote speakers shared their expertise with the aim of presenting to the participants a wide spectrum of their recent research developments in the field of Arabic NLP and related applications.

Also in this sixth edition, we were indeed privileged to have Springer publish the ICALP 2017 conference proceedings in their CCIS series.

ICALP 2017 focused on the following topics:

Information retrieval systems (IRS)

Question/answering systems (QAS)

Information extraction (IE)

Opining mining and sentiment analysis

Text categorization and clustering

Named entity recognition (NER)

Information extraction

Part-of-speech tagging (POS)

Word sense disambiguation (WSD)

Multi-word term extraction (MWTE)

Paraphrasing and textual entailment

Building ontologies

Text summarization

Machine translation systems (MTS)

Cross-language applications: Arabic–English, Arabic–Spanish, Arabic–French

Study of linguistic phenomena

Language resources: linguistic dictionary-based resources (phonology, morphology, semantics)

Development and normalization of linguistic resources and their exploitation in Arabic NLP applications

Spell-check and automatic corrections

Generation and analysis (morphology, syntax, semantics)

Linguistic resources and NLP applications

Comparative linguistic studies

Speech recognition and synthesis

Optical character recognition (OCR)

It is gratifying to note that the program of the ICALP conference covered a wide range of very interesting items (papers and posters) relating to Arabic NLP, from theory to practice, resources, and ontologies.

For this sixth edition, we received 64 submissions from 15 countries (Morocco, Algeria, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Ireland, Palestine Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, USA, and UK).

Over 65 technical experts from all over the world participated in the peer-review process. Based on the review results, the Program Chairs accepted only 18 papers for oral presentation and to be included in the CCIS proceedings published by Springer.

In addition, 15 papers were selected for poster presentation. We received many good submissions, but could only accept a small number of them for oral presentation. The overall quality of submissions was extremely high, and we have had to decline a number of very good papers like those selected as posters.

Each paper was assigned to five reviewers, and generally each one was reviewed by no less than three reviewers.

We take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thanks to the reviewers for providing high-quality and insightful reviews under a tight schedule, and also to thank the authors for their interest and contributions, which resulted in an outstanding technical program.

We are extremely grateful to the sponsors of the conference.

We extend a special word of thanks to all our colleagues of the Organizing Committee and secretariat for their hard work in organizing the conference, and to Springer for their assistance in publishing the ICALP 2017 proceedings in the CCIS series

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the organizers and in particular:

Prof. Omar Assobhei, President of USMBA University in Fez

Prof. Mustapha Ijaali, Director of ENSA, Dean of FST, USMBA University, Fez

Prof. Hassan Zaher, Dean of Faculty of Shari'a Sciences, USMBA University, Fez

All of them worked with us from the very beginning of the planning stage. We truly appreciate their dedication. The conference program would not have been possible without the following:

- Arabic Language Engineering Society in Morocco (ALESM)
- Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah (USMBA)
- Ecole Nationale des Sciences Appliquées de Fès (ENSA-Fès)
- Faculté des Sciences et Techniques (FST-Fès)
- Faculté des Sciences de la Scharia
- Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (CNRST-Morocco)
- Académie Hassan II des sciences et techniques

On behalf of the Steering, Program, and Organizing Committees, we hope you enjoy the contributions in this volume.

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