Preface to the First Workshop on Current Trends in Text Simplification

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Thanks to the availability of texts on the Web in recent years, increased knowledge and information have been made available to broader audiences. However, the way in which a text is written—vocabulary, syntax, text organisation/structure—can be difficult to read and understand for many people, especially those with low literacy, cognitive or linguistic impairment, or those with limited knowledge of the language of the text. Texts containing uncommon words or long and complicated sentences can be difficult to read and understand by people as well as difficult to analyse by machines. Automatic text simplification is the process of transforming a text into another text which, ideally conveying the same message, will be easier to read and understand by a broader audience.

Research in text simplification has been approached from different angles: rule-based linguistically informed methods, unsupervised corpus-based techniques, supervised machine learning or statistical machine translation have all been attempted in text simplification. Recently, research in text simplification has, like in many other natural language processing areas, increased the use of methods derived from the deep learning paradigm, and more specifically end-to-end sequence to sequence, and transformer-based learning methods. In spite of the current advances in the field, there are many important aspects of the simplification problem that need the attention of our community, including but not limited to: the design of appropriate evaluation metrics, the development of context-aware simplification solutions, the creation of appropriate language resources to support research and evaluation, the deployment of simplification in real environments for real users, the study of discourse factors in text simplification, the identification of factors affecting the readability of a text, etc.

In response to the call for papers for this workshop, we received seven submissions from France, Germany, India, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Each submission was rigorously reviewed by three members of the Program Committee. The final program of the workshop consists of six papers, which cover the topics of text simplification systems and evaluation methods, and two invited talks.

The workshop is co-located with the SEPLN 2021 conference and held on-line on 21st September 2021.

Workshop Organizers

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Proceedings

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