

QUALICO 2014 (Quantitative Linguistics Association Conference 2014) – 20th anniversary of IQLA and Journal of Quantitative Linguistics (JQL): Conference Report

QUALICO 2014 was held from May 29 until June 1, 2014 at the Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic), and was organized by IQLA (International Quantitative Linguistics Association) in cooperation with the Department of General Linguistics, the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University, Olomouc. QUALICOs have been held regularly since 1991 (Trier, followed by Moscow 1994, Helsinki 1997, Prague 2000, Athens, USA, 2003, Trier 2007, Graz 2009 and Belgrade 2012). This time QUALICO was devoted to the 20th anniversary of IQLA and the Journal of Quantitative Linguistics (cf. Chen/Liu 2014 with a detailed review on the past twenty years of the most important journal within quantitative linguistics). Since the conference was held in the Czech Republic, local organizers dedicated the conference to two pioneers of general and “Czechoslovakian” quantitative linguistics, namely to Gabriel Altmann and Luděk Hřebíček, both of them celebrating their birthdays within a few days of the conference (cf. the Festschrift for Luděk Hřebíček on the occasion of his 80th birthday in Altmann/Čech/Uhlířová 2014).

For QUALICO 2014 over 50 presentations and six posters were chosen after a double-blind review process (initially over 80 abstracts had been submitted to the organizing team), which employed eleven anonymous reviewers. Finally, 70 presenters were invited to QUALICO 2014, coming from eighteen different countries (Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America). Due to the high number of participants and limited time capacities the presentations had to be held partly in parallel sessions, which was a first for this kind of quantitative linguistics conference, and without any doubt it is a sign of the strong and increasing interest in applications of quantitative methods in linguistics and text analysis. The conference itself took place in the Art Centre of Palacký University, a well-equipped and recently renovated Baroque building of the former Jesuit College and one of the oldest parts of the university in Olomouc.

The detailed programme¹ and the abstracts of the presentations and posters can be found in the booklet of abstracts, edited by M. Benešová, E. Kelih and J. Mačutek (cf. Benešová/Kelih/Mačutek 2014)². The scientific programme of the conference started with a

¹ Retrieved November 25, 2014 http://iqla.org/qualico_2014/program_qualico14.pdf

² Retrieved November 25, 2014 from

http://iqla.org/qualico_2014/Book_of_Abstracts_QUALICO_2014_final.pdf

plenary talk by Reinhard Köhler, who gave an overview of the current state of quantitative linguistics and its interrelation to other linguistic branches (like corpus linguistics, psycholinguistic, language typology etc.) dealing with quantitative and statistical methods too. The first day of the conference was mainly devoted to problems of the Menzerath–Altmann law (MAL) from different perspectives (readability of written texts, problems of heterogeneity on different levels, where MAL fits, film analysis). In this context the local team of linguistics and mathematicians from Palacký University focused their presentations on crucial problems of the segmentation of written and spoken texts on different levels and languages. Further talks on the first day were given about quantitative methods in loanword research, quantitative dialectology and frequency-based approaches in phonology.

On the second day (May 30) of the conference, 23 talks were presented and held in parallel sessions. They were devoted to some core problems of quantitative linguistics such as the Zipf law, stylometrics, word length research and word frequency studies. One more focus of the second day was the increasingly popular application of quantitative methods to problems of grammar, syntax and semantics (for instance quantitative analysis of case diversification, word order and valency)

The third day (May 31) started again with some presentations of quantitative analyses of morphological and syntactical problems, accompanied with quantitative text linguistics. One session was devoted to authorship problems, a traditional field of quantitative linguistics with ongoing and refined methodological approaches as well as new general problems like the analysis of political speeches and tweets. Furthermore, some talks were given about the Krylov law, problems of modelling multidimensional networks and to some problems of linguistics diversification.

In conclusion, the conference gave a representative and broad overview of the current state of quantitative linguistics and related fields. In particular, the relation to corpus linguistics, frequency-based approaches, language typology and computational linguistics were reflected and discussed in many of the given presentations. Moreover, in the poster session recent quantitative linguistics projects and software developments were presented as well. QUALICO 2014 was a successful meeting, consisting of traditional topics of quantitative linguistics and many new inputs coming from the recently observable ongoing transfer of quantitative methods to formerly less explored linguistic areas and branches.

The conference was generously supported by the European Social Fund and the national budget of the Czech Republic.³ The conference was accompanied by a rich social programme (welcome banquet, barbeque in the university gardens and a trip to the 19th-century Bouzov Castle near Olomouc and a guided tour of Olomouc historical centre), providing much time (June 1) and opportunity for the participants for networking and discussions on quantitative linguistics. The publication of a peer-reviewed selection of the papers is planned for 2015 in the de Gruyter Quantitative Linguistics series and is to be edited by Arjuna Tuzzi, Martina Benešová and Ján Mačutek.

References:

Altmann, Gabriel; Čech, Radek; Uhlířová, Ludmila (2014): *Empirical Approaches to Text and Language Analysis. Dedicated to Luděk Hřebíček on the occasion of his 80th birthday*. Lüdenscheid: RAM-Verlag. [= Studies in Quantitative Linguistics, 17]

Benešová, Martina; Kelih, Emmerich; Mačutek, Ján (2014): *Book of Abstracts Qualico 2014. 20th Anniversary of International Quantitative Linguistics Association (IQLA) & Journal of Quantitative Linguistics (JQL) foundation*. Olomouc, Czech Republic, May 29 - June 1 2014. Olomouc: Philosophical Faculty of Palacký University. [http://iqla.org/qualico_2014/Book_of_Abstracts_QUALICO_2014_final.pdf]

Chen, Ruina; Liu, Haitao (2014): Quantitative Aspects of Journal of Quantitative Linguistics. In: *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics* 21 (4), pp. 299–340.

Emmerich Kelih
Martina Benešová
Petra Martinková

Correspondence address

Dr. Emmerich Kelih
Institut für Slawistik
Spitalgasse 2-4, Hof 3
A-1090 Wien
emmerich.kelih@univie.ac.at

³ Details about the grants: Innovation of General Linguistics and Communication Theory Studies in Cooperation with Natural Science, reg. no.: CZ.1.07/2.2.00/28.0076 and Linguistic and Lexicostatistic Analysis in Cooperation with Linguistics, Mathematics, Biology, Psychology, reg. no. CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0161.