SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION BRIEF

Action number: CA17132

STSM start and end date: 29/01/2023 to 04/02/2023

Grantee name: Martin Hinton

Home institution: University of Łódź

Host institution: University of Zagreb

Research interest:

Martin Hinton works on all aspects of argument evaluation, for which he has developed the CAPNA assessment system. His work includes concern with the identification of argument types and argumentative situations, as well as a reconsideration of fallacy theory.

STSM summary:

The purpose of this study mission was to work with Prof. Gabrijela Kišiček in developing the Comprehensive Assessment Procedure for Natural Argumentation (CAPNA) into a tool capable of conducting the assessment and evaluation of auditory arguments, particularly in the areas of public information, advertising and political communication. As well as making and testing modifications to the CAPNA itself, this required significant work to be done on the theoretical understanding of such arguments and the role which the sound elements play in them.

The results of our cooperation will be presented in a paper in a high-level argumentation journal and at international conferences in the coming months. The key points are:

1. A typology of auditory arguments which divides sounds by the source of their origin as human or non-human, and further separates human sounds into those connected with speech, such as accents and intonation, from others, such as clapping and yawning.
2. A discussion of the role auditory elements play in arguments and how their analysis can be accommodated within mainstream argument theory. We conclude that ‘data’ premises and conclusions can be provided in sound form, but ‘warrant’ premises cannot. We also discuss which argumentation schemes auditory inputs can and do appear in, particularly in the sphere of public policy discourse. This section includes a discussion of the relationship of auditory arguments to the Argument Type Identification Procedure and Periodic Table of Arguments of Jean Wagemans.
3. We discuss at length the modifications which need to be made to the CAPNA and its system of Procedural Questions in order for the evaluation of auditory arguments to be carried out. The necessary adjustments turned out to be fewer and simpler than we had expected. At the most fundamental level, we introduce the characteristic ‘authentic’ alongside the existing ‘true/acceptable/likely’ for examining premises. Truth and acceptability, in particular, seem to be qualities of propositions; authentic here is taken to mean sounds which are genuine and untampered with.
4. We conduct a number of sample evaluations of auditory arguments, covering all the identified types and the possible roles of the sound elements. We show that such evaluations can be carried out effectively with the modified CAPNA. We also look at what further developments and improvements might be made.

On top of these research tasks, the visit also included a presentation of research questions and results to staff and students of the University of Zagreb, followed by an engaging discussion of their significance and scope. It is hoped that this interest will lead to further cooperation in the future, developing both the common European approach to argumentation and the network of researchers building it.