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This is the first of a set of special issues to appear in the Journal emanating from the 14th European Conference on Eye Movements, held in Potsdam, Germany, in August 2007. These issues stand in the tradition of publishing a selection of peer-reviewed proceedings of this conference series. In the present case we hope they will also represent the start of a new tradition by appearing in an open access journal devoted to serving the ever-growing interdisciplinary community of eye-movement researchers.

The theme linking the four articles in this issue is that they report corpus analyses of eye movements from reading. This empirical approach has gained momentum over the last years for at least two reasons. First, corpus analyses document reliable effects ranging across a spectrum of influences, from oculomotor and perceptual through attentional to language-related processes. Second, they complement experimental approaches in the quest to establish the validity of theoretical propositions relating, for example, to the nature of the perceptual span and how the information uptake is modulated by the predictability of upcoming words. To this end, indicators already in use (such as co-occurrence statistics) or under active development (such as surprisal) have been developed in cooperation with computational linguistics. The four articles provide new perspective on these theoretical issues.

The research reported here is also linked as a European Collaborative Research Project of the European Science Foundation in which these corpus data are prepared for public access. In this context, cross-language comparative corpus analyses of eye movements in reading are expected to contribute to the separation of language-specific and language-invariant aspects. In addition, such corpus analyses are ideally suited to provide "reality checks" for computational models of eye-movement control during reading and set new challenges for their further development. The interdisciplinary and international perspectives represented in this approach illustrate one of our hopes for the Journal of Eye Movement Research.

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