

Exploring challenges in Semantic Role Labeling

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- 1 Semantic Role Labeling
- 2 Semantic Features for SRL
- 3 An Arc-factored Model for Joint Syntactic-SRL Parsing

Talk Overview

- 1 Semantic Role Labeling
- 2 Semantic Features for SRL
- 3 An Arc-factored Model for Joint Syntactic-SRL Parsing

The Problem

Semantic Role Labeling

SRL ^{def} = identify the *arguments* of a given proposition and assign them *semantic labels* describing the *roles* they play in the predicate (i.e., recognize predicate argument structures)

The Problem

IE point of view

SRL ^{def} detecting basic event structures such as *who* did *what* to *whom*, *when* and *where*

[The luxury auto maker]_{AGENT} [last year]_{TEMP} sold_P [1,214 cars]_{OBJECT}
[in the U.S.]_{LOCATIVE}

SRL can be very useful for many practical NLP applications:
IE, Q&A, Machine Translation, Summarization, etc.

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The Problem

Syntactic variations

TEMP HITTER THING HIT INSTRUMENT
Yesterday, Kristina hit Scott with a baseball

- Scott was hit by Kristina yesterday with a baseball
- Yesterday, Scott was hit with a baseball by Kristina
- Yesterday Scott was hit by Kristina with a baseball
- Kristina hit Scott with a baseball yesterday

⇒ All of them share the same semantic representation:

hit(Kristina, Scott, yesterday, with a baseball)

Example from (Yih & Toutanova, 2006)

The Problem

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Structural view

Mapping from input to output structures:

- Input is *text* (enriched with morpho-syntactic information)
- Output is a *sequence of labeled arguments*
- Sequential segmenting/labeling problem

“ Mr. Smith **sent** the report to me this morning . ”

[Mr. Smith]_{AGENT} **sent** [the report]_{OBJ} [to me]_{RECIP} [this morning]_{TMP} .

Mr._{B-AGENT} Smith_I **sent** the_{B-OBJ} report_I to_{B-RECIP} me_I this_{B-TMP}
morning_I ._O

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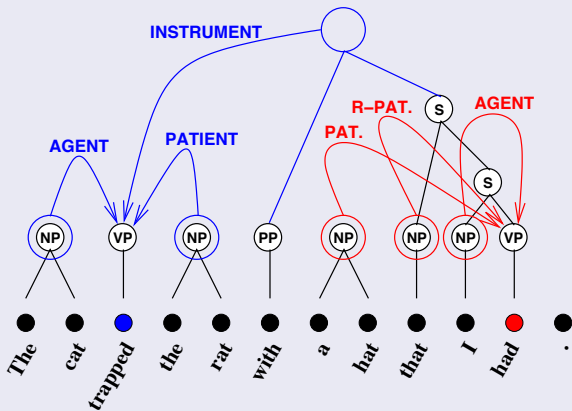
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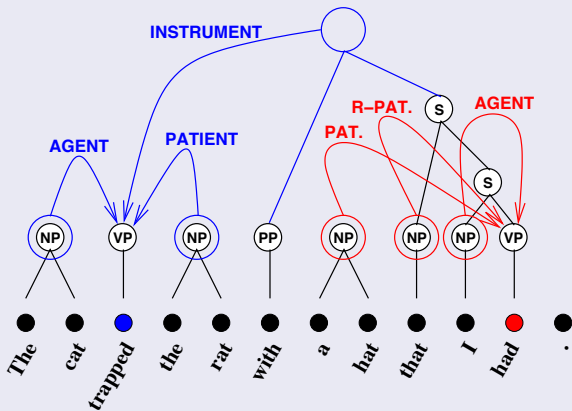
Structural View



Output is a *hierarchy of labeled arguments*

The Problem

Structural View

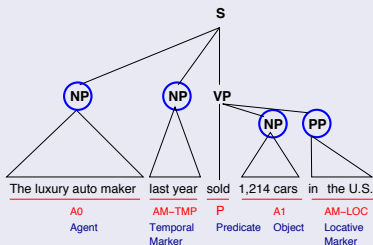


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The Problem

Linguistic nature of the problem

- Argument identification is strongly related to syntax

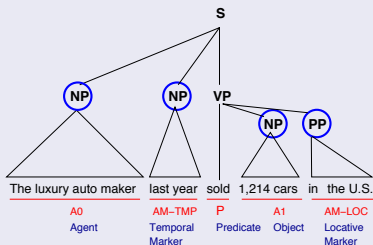


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(e.g., selectional preferences could play an important role)

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- Role labeling is a semantic task
(e.g., selectional preferences could play an important role)

The Statistical Approach to SRL

A pipeline architecture in 3 steps

① *Select argument candidates*

⇒ Parse the sentence and apply heuristics to select a compact subset of syntactic constituents as candidate arguments

② *Local scoring of candidates*

⇒ Apply classifiers locally to candidate arguments to identify actual arguments and label them with semantic roles

③ *Joint scoring of complete solutions*

⇒ Apply inference to enforce globally good predicate-argument structures (ILP, re-ranking, structure learning, etc.)

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Joint work with

Eneko Agirre, Mihai Surdeanu and Beñat Zepirain

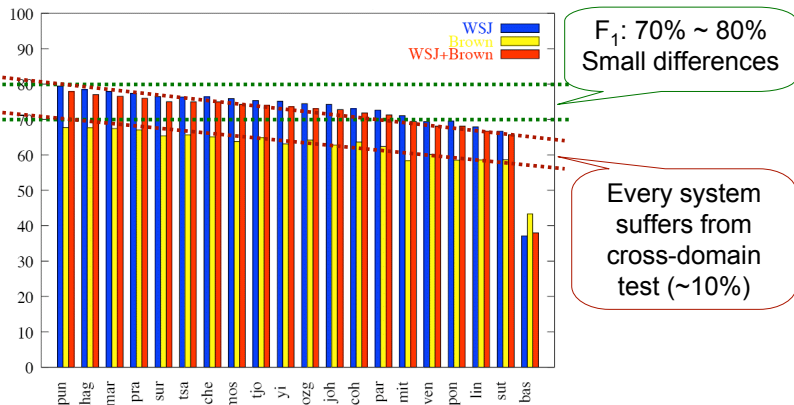
(Zepirain et al. 2010) — ACL

(Zepirain et al. 2011) — NAACL

(Zepirain et al. 2013) — Computational Linguistics 39(3)

Results from CoNLL-2005 shared task

Results on WSJ and Brown Tests



Results from CoNLL-2005 shared task

Reasons for the low generalization ability

- The training corpus is not representative and large enough (and it will never be)
- Taggers and syntactic parsers also experience a significant drop in performance
- The main loss in performance takes place in role classification, not identification — semantic explanation (Pradhan et al., 2008)

Semantic Features for SRL

Motivation

- Most current systems capture semantics through lexicalized features on the predicate and the head word of the argument to be classified
- But lexical features are **sparse** and **generalize badly**
[JFK]_{Patient} *was_assassinated* [in **Dallas**]_{LOC}
[JFK]_{Patient} *was_assassinated* [in **November**]_{TMP}
- [in **Texas**]_{???}, [in **autumn**]_{???}

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Semantic Features for SRL

Motivation

Selectional Preferences and distributional similarity techniques should help us to classify arguments with low-frequency or unknown head words

[Dallas \approx Texas]*Location*, [November \approx autumn]*Temporal*

Previous Work

Selectional Preferences

- Modeling semantic preferences that predicates impose on their arguments
- Long tradition of automatic acquisition of selectional preferences (SPs) from corpora. WordNet-based and distributional models of SPs
(Resnik, 1993; Pantel and Lin, 2000; Brockmann and Lapata, 2003)
(Erk 2007; Erk et al., 2011; etc.)
 - ⇒ e.g., estimate plausibility of triples:
(verb, argument, head-word)
 - ⇒ useful for syntactic-semantic disambiguation

Previous Work

SPs applied to Semantic Role Labeling

- (Gildea and Jurafsky, 2002) – FrameNet
 - ⇒ First researchers to apply selectional preferences to SRL
 - ⇒ Distributional clustering and WordNet-based techniques to generalize argument heads
 - ⇒ Slight improvement in role classification (NP arguments)
- Zapirain et al. (2010; 2013) – PropBank
 - ⇒ Show that selectional preferences can improve semantic role classification in a state-of-the-art SRL system

Selectional Preferences for SRL

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Two types of selectional preferences (SP)

- i. *verb-role*: list of heads of NP arguments of the predicate *verb* that are labeled with the role *role*

```

write-Arg0:  Angrist anyone baker ball bank Barlow Bates ...
write-Arg1:  abstract act analysis article asset bill book ...
write-Arg2:  bank commander hundred jaguar Kemp member ...
write-AM-LOC: paper space ...
...

```

- ii. *prep-role*: list of nominal heads of PP arguments with preposition *prep* that are labeled with the role *role*

```

from-Arg2:  academy account acquisition activity ad ...
from-Arg3:  activity advertising agenda airport ...
from-Arg4:  europe Golenbock system Vizcaya west
from-AM-TMP: april august beginning bell day dec. half ...
from-AM-LOC: agency area asia body bureau orlando ...
...

```

Selectional Preferences for SRL

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

SP models: $SP_{sim}(p, r, w)$ compatibility score

- **Discriminative approach**: given a new argument of a predicate p , we compare its head (w) to the selectional preference of each possible role label r , i.e., we want to find the role with the selectional preference that fits the head best
- We compute the compatibility scores using two different methods
 - ⇒ WordNet based —using (Resnik, 1993)
 - ⇒ Based on distributional similarity —a la Erk (2007)

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WordNet SP models

- Resnik formula (1993) is used to precalculate a weighted list of relevant synsets for the lists of words contained in the SPs

SP *write-Arg0*: Angrist anyone baker ball bank Barlow Bates ...

n#00002086 5.875 *life form* organism being living thing "any living entity"

n#00001740 5.737 *entity* something "anything having existence (living or nonliving)"

n#00009457 4.782 *object* physical object "a physical (tangible and visible) entity;"

n#00004123 4.351 *person* individual someone somebody mortal human soul "a human being;"

...

SP *write-Arg1*: abstract act analysis article asset bill book ...

n#00019671 7.956 *communication* "something that is communicated between people or groups"

n#04949838 4.257 *message* content subject matter substance "what a communication that ..."

n#00018916 3.848 *relation* "an abstraction belonging to or characteristic of two entities"

n#00013018 3.574 *abstraction* "a concept formed by extracting common features from examples"

...

WordNet SP models

- At test time, for a new argument of the predicate **write** with head word **book**:
 - ⇒ consider $S = \{\langle \text{book} \rangle\} \cup$ “all its hypernyms in WordNet” (for all senses of book)
 - ⇒ $SP_{Res}(\text{write}, \text{Arg1}, \text{book})$ returns the sum of the weights of the synsets in S matching the synsets in the list corresponding to the SP **write-Arg1**

Selectional Preferences for SRL

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Distributional SP models: based on Erk's (2007) setting

JFK was assassinated [in Texas]???

SP *in-TMP*: November, century, month

SP *in-LOC*: Dallas, railway, city

$$SP_{sim}(p, r, w) = \sum_{w_i \in Seen(p, r)} sim(w, w_i) \cdot weight(p, r, w_i)$$

$$SP(in, TMP, Texas) = sim(Texas, November) \cdot weight(in, TMP, November) + \\ sim(Texas, century) \cdot weight(in, TMP, century) + \\ sim(Texas, month) \cdot weight(in, TMP, month)$$

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$$SP(in, LOC, Texas) > SP(in, TMP, Texas)$$

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$$SP(in, LOC, Texas) > SP(in, TMP, Texas)$$

Distributional SP models: various instantiations for *sim*

- Using Padó and Lapata's software (2007) for computing distributional similarity measures
 - ⇒ Run on the British National Corpus
 - ⇒ Optimal parameterization as described in the paper
 - ⇒ Jaccard, cosine and Lin's similarity measures: sim_{Jac} , sim_{cos} and sim_{Lin}
- Using the already available Lin's thesaurus (Lin, 1998)
 - ⇒ Direct and second order similarity: sim_{Lin}^{th} , sim_{Jac}^{th2} and sim_{cos}^{th2}
 - ⇒ Average of both directions similarity

Evaluation of SPs in isolation

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Setting: Assign role labels to argument head words based solely on SP scores

⇒ For each head word (w), select the role (r) of the predicate or preposition (p) which fits best the head word:

$$R_{sim}(p, w) = \arg \max_{r \in Roles(p)} SP_{sim}(p, r, w)$$

⇒ SPs based on (p, r, w) triples from CoNLL-2005 data

⇒ In-domain (WSJ) and out-of-domain (Brown) test sets
CoNLL-2005

⇒ **Lexical baseline** model: for a test pair (p, w) , assign the role under which the head (w) occurred most often in the training data given the predicate (p)

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	prec.	rec.	F ₁	prec.	rec.	F ₁
lexical	82.98	43.77	57.31	68.47	13.60	22.69
SP_{Res}	63.47	53.24	57.91	55.12	44.15	49.03
$SP_{sim_{Jac}}$	61.83	61.40	61.61	55.42	53.45	54.42
$SP_{sim_{cos}}$	64.67	64.22	64.44	56.56	54.54	55.53
$SP_{sim_{th2}^{Jac}}$	70.82	70.33	70.57	62.37	60.15	61.24
$SP_{sim_{th2}^{cos}}$	70.28	69.80	70.04	62.36	60.14	61.23

- ⇒ Lexical features have a high precision but very low recall
- ⇒ SPs are able to effectively generalize lexical features
- ⇒ SPs based on distributional similarity are better
- ⇒ Second-order similarity variants (Lin) attain the best results

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SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

- *SwiRL* system for SRL (Surdeanu et al., 2007)
 - ⇒ System from CoNLL-2005 shared task (PropBank)
 - ⇒ Standard architecture (ML based on AdaBoost and SVMs)
 - ⇒ Best results from single (non-combined) systems at CoNLL-2005
- Simple approach: extending *SwiRL* features with SP predictions
 - ⇒ We train several extended *SwiRL-SP_i* models, one per selectional preferences model *SP_i*
 - ⇒ For each example (p, w) of *SwiRL-SP_i*, we add a single new feature whose value is the predicted role label $R_i(p, w)$

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Results

	WSJ-test			Brown		
	Core	Adj	All	Core	Adj	All
<i>SwiRL</i>	93.25	81.31	90.83	84.42	57.76	79.52
<i>SwiRL</i> + SP_{Res}	93.17	81.08	90.76	84.52	59.24	79.86
<i>SwiRL</i> + $SP_{sim_{Jac}}$	93.37	80.30	90.86	84.43	59.54	79.83
<i>SwiRL</i> + $SP_{sim_{cos}}$	93.33	80.92	90.87	85.14	60.16	80.50
<i>SwiRL</i> + $SP_{sim_{Jac}^{th2}}$	93.03	82.75	90.95	85.62	59.63	80.75
<i>SwiRL</i> + $SP_{sim_{cos}^{th2}}$	93.78	80.56	91.23	84.95	61.01	80.48

- ⇒ Slight improvements, especially noticeable on Brown corpus
- ⇒ Weak signal of a single feature?

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

- Simple combinations of the individual $SwiRL+SP_i$ classifiers worked quite well (**majority voting**)
- We also trained a **meta-classifier** to combine the $SwiRL+SP_i$ classifiers and the stand-alone SP_i models:
 - ⇒ Binary classification approach:
“is a proposed role correct or not?”
 - ⇒ Features are based on the predictions of base SP_i and $SwiRL+SP_i$ models
 - ⇒ Trained with a SVM with a quadratic polynomial kernel

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Results (II)

	WSJ-test			Brown		
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Meta	94.37	83.40	92.12	86.20	63.40	81.91

- Statistically significant improvements (99%) for both core and adjunct arguments, both in domain and out of domain

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Output analysis

- Manual inspection of 50 cases in which the meta classifier corrects SwiRL:
 - ⇒ Usually cases with low frequency verbs or argument heads
 - ⇒ In ~58% of the cases, syntax does not disambiguate, seems to suggest a wrong role label or it is confusing SwiRL because it is incorrect. However, most of the SP predictions are correct.
 - ⇒ ~30% of the cases: unclear source of the SwiRL error but still several SP models suggest the correct role
 - ⇒ ~12% of the cases: chance effect

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SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Output analysis: example 1

		Several	JJ	(S1(S(NP*
		traders	NNS	*)
		could	MD	(VP*
		be	VB	(VP*
		seen	VCN	(VP*
		shaking	VBG	(S(VP*
		their	PRP\$	(NP*
		heads	NNS	*))
		when	WRB	(SBAR(WHADVP*)
A1	A0	the	DT	(S(NP*
A1	A0	news	NN	*)
	(P)	flashed	VBD	(VP*))))))
		.	.	*)

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Output analysis: example 2

		Italian	NNP	(S1(S(NP*
		President	NNP	*
		Francesco	NNP	*
		Cossiga	NNP	*)
	(P)	promised	VBD	(VP*
A2	A1	a	DT	(NP(NP*
A2	A1	quick	JJ	*
A2	A1	investigation	NN	*)
A2	A1	into	IN	(PP*
A2	A1	whether	IN	(SBAR*
A2	A1	Olivetti	NNP	(S(NP*)
A2	A1	broke	VBD	(VP*
A2	A1	Cocom	NNP	(NP*
A2	A1	rules	NNS	*)))))))
		.	.	*)

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Output analysis: example 3

		Annual	JJ	(S(NP*
		payments	NNS	*)
		will	MD	(VP*
		more	RBR	(VP(ADVP*
		than	IN	*)
	(P)	double	VB	*
A3	TMP	from	IN	(PP*
A3	TMP	a	DT	(NP*
A3	TMP	year	NN	*
A3	TMP	ago	RB	*))
		to	TO	(PP*
		about	RB	(NP(QP*
		\$240	CD	*
		million	CD	*))
		...		

SPs in a SRL System

(Zapirain et al., 2013)

Output analysis: example 4

		Procter	NNP	(S1(S(NP*
		&	CC	*
		Gamble	NNP	*
		Co.	NNP	*)
		plans	VBZ	(VP*
		to	TO	(S(VP*
		begin	VB	(VP*
	(P)	testing	VBG	(S(VP*
		next	JJ	(NP*
		month	NN	*))
A1	A0	a	DT	(NP(NP*
A1	A0	superco.	JJ	*
A1	A0	detergent	NN	*)
A1	A0	that	WDT	(SBAR(WHNP*)
		...		
A1	A0	washload	NN	(NP*)))))
		.	.	*)

Talk Overview

- 1 Semantic Role Labeling
- 2 Semantic Features for SRL
- 3 An Arc-factored Model for Joint Syntactic-SRL Parsing

Joint work with

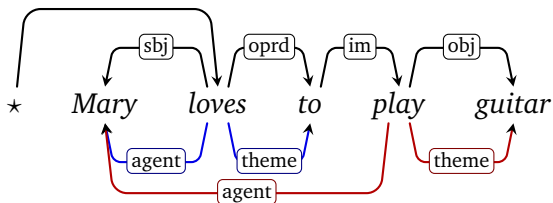
Xavier Lluís and Xavier Carreras

(Lluís et al. 2013) — TACL (to be presented at ACL)

Joint parsing of syntactic and semantic dependencies

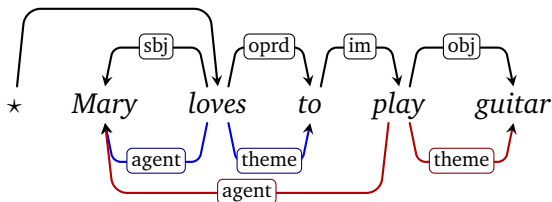


A Simplified Example



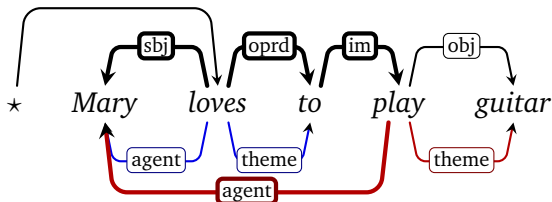
- Predicate-argument structures are naturally represented with dependencies

A Simplified Example



- Semantic roles are strongly related to syntactic structure
- Typical systems find semantic roles in a pipeline
 - ⇒ First obtain the syntactic tree
 - ⇒ Second obtain the semantic roles, using the syntactic tree
- Pipeline systems can not correct syntax based on semantic roles

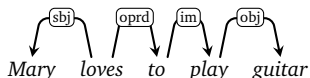
A Simplified Example



- We model the two structures jointly
 - ⇒ To capture interactions between syntactic and semantic dependencies
- Challenge:
 - ⇒ Some semantic dependencies are associated with a segment of syntactic dependencies
 - ⇒ Hard to factorize the two structures jointly

Decomposing Syntactic and Semantic Trees

Syntactic Tree

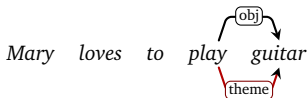
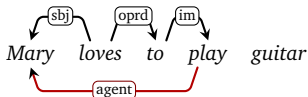
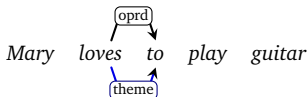
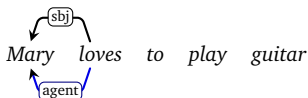


Semantic trees need to **agree** with the syntactic tree.

Semantic features can conjoin

- any syntactic feature with
- a semantic role

Semantic Trees with Local Syntax



Syntactic subproblem

$$\begin{aligned} \text{syn}(\mathbf{x}) &= \underset{\mathbf{y}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \text{score_syn}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \\ &\text{subject to } \text{cTree: } \mathbf{y} \text{ is a projective tree} \end{aligned}$$

- Solved by a standard dependency parsing algorithm
- $\text{score_syn}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ is arc-factored: 1st and 2nd order models
- Graph-based parsing algorithms, reimplementing (McDonald, 2005; Carreras et al., 2007)
- Trained with (linear) average structure perceptron using state-of-the-art features

Semantic Subproblem

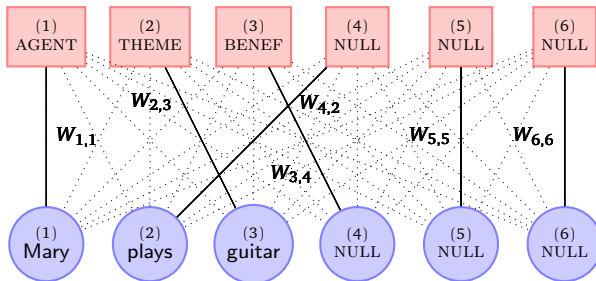
$$srl(\mathbf{x}) = \underset{\mathbf{z}, \pi}{\operatorname{argmax}} \operatorname{score_srl}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}, \pi)$$

subject to

- cRole:** no repeated roles
- cArg:** at most one role per token
- cPath:** π codifies paths consistent with \mathbf{z}

- In a predicate:
 - ⇒ A token appears at most once as argument
 - ⇒ A semantic role appears at most once
- $\operatorname{score_srl}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}, \pi)$ is factorized at the level of $\langle \mathbf{x}, p, a, r, \pi^{p,a,r} \rangle$
- local $\operatorname{score_srl}(\mathbf{x}, p, a, r, \pi^{p,a,r})$ provided by linear classifiers
- We frame the *argmax* inference as a *linear assignment problem*

SRL as Assignment



- The Hungarian algorithm solves it in $\mathcal{O}(n^3)$
- $w_{i,j}$ are the previous local predictions $\text{score_srl}(\mathbf{x}, p, a, r, \pi^{p,a,r})$
- In practice, the list of most likely paths from p to a is pre-computed using syntactic models
- Learning is performed with structure perceptron, with feedback applied after solving the assignment problem

Joint Syntactic-Semantic Inference

$$\langle \mathbf{y}^*, \mathbf{z}^*, \boldsymbol{\pi}^* \rangle = \underset{\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z}, \boldsymbol{\pi}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \operatorname{sc_syn}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) + \operatorname{sc_srl}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}, \boldsymbol{\pi})$$

subject to cTree, cRole, cArg, cPath
cSubtree: \mathbf{y} is consistent with $\boldsymbol{\pi}$

Joint Syntactic-Semantic Inference

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{y}^*, \mathbf{z}^*, \boldsymbol{\pi}^* \rangle &= \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z}, \boldsymbol{\pi}} \operatorname{sc_syn}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) + \operatorname{sc_srl}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}, \boldsymbol{\pi}) \\ &\text{subject to } \text{cTree}, \text{cRole}, \text{cArg}, \text{cPath} \\ &\quad \text{cSubtree: } \mathbf{y} \text{ is consistent with } \boldsymbol{\pi} \end{aligned}$$

cSubtree constraints can be easily expressed as:

$$\forall d \in \mathbf{y}, \quad c \cdot \mathbf{y}_d \geq \sum_{p,a,r \in \mathbf{z}} \pi_d^{p,a,r}$$

or, equivalently, as equality constraints

$$\forall d \in \mathbf{y}, \quad c \cdot \mathbf{y}_d - \sum_{p,a,r \in \mathbf{z}} \pi_d^{p,a,r} - \xi_d = 0$$

Joint Syntactic-Semantic Inference

- We employed Dual Decomposition to solve the joint inference (Rush and Collins, 2011) (Sontag et al 2010)
- Lagrangian relaxation-based method that iteratively solves decomposed sub-problems with agreement constraints:
 - ⇒ Subtree constraints are relaxed by introducing Lagrange multipliers for every dependency λ_d
 - ⇒ Subproblems now depend on the λ penalty variables but can be efficiently solved
 - ⇒ Syntax: standard dependency parsing inference
 - ⇒ Semantic: linear assignment
- Guaranteed optimal solution when it converges
- In experiments, convergence in $> 99.5\%$ of sentences

Experiments and Results

We ran experiments on the CoNLL-2009 datasets with the following configurations:

- Pipeline** best *syn* then best *srl* enforcing cArg
- +Assignment** enforces cRole, cArg over best *syn*
- Forest** works with a forest of *syn* trees
- DD** applies dual-decomposition

Experiments and Results

system	syn	sem		
	acc	prec	rec	F_1
Pipeline-1				
+Assignment-1				
Forest-1				
DD-1				

Results on WSJ development set

Experiments and Results

system	syn	sem		
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁
Pipeline-1	85.32	86.23	67.67	75.83
+Assignment-1	85.32	84.08	71.82	77.47
Forest-1				
DD-1				

+Assignment improves over Pipeline

Experiments and Results

system	syn	sem		
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁
Pipeline-1	85.32	86.23	67.67	75.83
+Assignment-1	85.32	84.08	71.82	77.47
Forest-1	85.32	80.67	73.60	76.97
DD-1				

Forests shows higher recall

Experiments and Results

system	syn	sem		
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁
Pipeline-1	85.32	86.23	67.67	75.83
+Assignment-1	85.32	84.08	71.82	77.47
Forest-1	85.32	80.67	73.60	76.97
DD-1	85.48	83.99	72.69	77.94

DD-1 achieves better sem F₁

Experiments and Results

system	syn	sem		
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁
Pipeline-1	85.32	86.23	67.67	75.83
+Assignment-1	85.32	84.08	71.82	77.47
Forest-1	85.32	80.67	73.60	76.97
DD-1	85.48	83.99	72.69	77.94
Pipeline-2	87.77	87.07	68.65	76.77
+Assignment-2	87.77	85.21	73.41	78.87
Forest-2	87.77	80.67	73.60	76.97
DD-2	87.84	85.20	73.23	78.79

Second-order paths are quite accurate

Experiments and Results

WSJ	syn	sem			
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁	PP
Lluís09	87.48	73.87	67.40	70.49	39.68
Merlo09	88.79	81.00	76.45	78.66	54.80
DD-2	89.21	86.01	74.84	80.04	55.73

Results in WSJ corpus (in-domain) test set

Experiments and Results

WSJ	syn	sem			
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁	PP
Lluís09	87.48	73.87	67.40	70.49	39.68
Merlo09	88.79	81.00	76.45	78.66	54.80
DD-2	89.21	86.01	74.84	80.04	55.73

Better results than *Merlo09*

Experiments and Results

Brown	syn	sem			
	acc	prec	rec	F ₁	PP
Lluís09	80.92	62.29	59.22	60.71	29.79
Merlo09	80.84	68.97	63.06	65.89	38.92
DD-2	82.61	74.12	61.59	67.83	38.92

Results in Brown corpus (out-of-domain) test set

Thank you!

Exploring challenges in Semantic Role Labeling

Lluís Màrquez

TALP Research Center

Technical University of Catalonia

Invited talk at ABBYY Open Seminar

Moscow, Russia, May 28, 2013