Word Meaning and Similarity

Terminology: lemma and wordform

- A lemma or citation form
 - Same stem, part of speech, rough semantics
- A wordform
 - The inflected word as it appears in text

Wordform	Lemma
banks	bank
sung	sing

Lemmas have senses

One lemma "bank" can have many meanings:

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Sense 1: • ...a bank can hold the investments in a custodial account...
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Sense 2: "...as agriculture burgeons on the east bank of the river will shrink even more"
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- Sense (or word sense)
 - A discrete representation of an aspect of a word's meaning.
- The lemma bank here has two senses

Homonymy

Homonyms: words that share a form but have unrelated, distinct meanings:

- bank₁: financial institution, bank₂: sloping land
- bat₁: club for hitting a ball, bat₂: nocturnal flying mammal

Homonymy is of two types: Homephones and Homographs

 Homophones: senses that are linked to lemmas with the same pronunciation but different spellings (e.g., wood/would, two/too/to, right/write)

- Homographs: distinct senses linked to lemmas with the same orthographic form but different pronunciation
 - bass a deep voice or tone/a kind of fish
 - bat a piece of sporting equipment used in baseball/a winged animal associated with vampires

Homonymy causes problems for NLP applications

- Information retrieval
 - "bat care"
- Machine Translation
 - bat: murciélago (animal) or bat (for baseball)
- Text-to-Speech
 - bass (stringed instrument) vs. bass (fish)

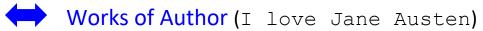
Polysemy

- 1. When some banks furnish sperm only to the needy...
- 2. I withdrew the money from the bank
- Are those the same sense?
 - Sense 2: "A financial institution"
 - Sense 1: "Repository of a biological entity"
- A polysemous word has related meanings
 - Most non-rare words have multiple meanings

Metonymy or Systematic Polysemy: A systematic relationship between senses

- Lots of types of polysemy are systematic
 - School, university, hospital
 - All can mean the institution or the building.
- A systematic relationship:
 - Building Organization
- Other such kinds of systematic polysemy:

Author (Jane Austen wrote Emma)



How do we know when a word has more than one sense?

- The "zeugma" test: Two senses of serve?
 - Which flights serve breakfast?
 - Does Lufthansa serve Philadelphia?
 - ?Does Lufthansa serve breakfast and Philadelphia?
- Since this conjunction sounds weird,
 - we say that these are two different senses of "serve"

Synonyms

- Word that have the same meaning in some or all contexts.
 - filbert / hazelnut
 - couch / sofa
 - big / large
 - automobile / car
 - vomit / throw up
 - Water / H₂0
- Two lexemes are synonyms
 - if they can be substituted for each other in all situations
 - If so they have the same propositional meaning

Synonyms

- But there are few (or no) examples of perfect synonymy.
 - Even if many aspects of meaning are identical
 - Still may not preserve the acceptability based on notions of politeness, slang, register, genre, etc.
- Example:
 - Water/H₂0
 - Big/large
 - Brave/courageous

Synonymy is a relation between senses rather than words

- Consider the words big and large
- Are they synonyms?
 - How big is that plane?
 - Would I be flying on a large or small plane?
- How about here:
 - Miss Nelson became a kind of **big** sister to Benjamin.
 - ?Miss Nelson became a kind of large sister to Benjamin.
- Why?
 - big has a sense that means being older, or grown up
 - large lacks this sense

Antonyms

- Senses that are opposites with respect to one feature of meaning
- Otherwise, they are very similar!

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dark/light short/long fast/slow rise/fall
hot/cold up/down in/out
```

- More formally: antonyms can
 - define a binary opposition or be at opposite ends of a scale
 - long/short, fast/slow
 - Be **reversives**:
 - rise/fall, up/down

Hyponymy and Hypernymy

- One sense is a hyponym of another if the first sense is more specific, denoting a subclass of the other
 - car is a hyponym of vehicle
 - mango is a hyponym of fruit
- Conversely hypernym/superordinate ("hyper is super")
 - vehicle is a hypernym of car
 - fruit is a hypernym of mango

Superordinate/hyper	vehicle	fruit	furniture
Subordinate/hyponym	car	mango	chair

Hyponymy more formally

- Extensional:
 - The class denoted by the superordinate extensionally includes the class denoted by the hyponym
- Entailment:
 - A sense A is a hyponym of sense B if being an A entails being a B
- Hyponymy is usually transitive
 - (A hypo B and B hypo C entails A hypo C)
- Another name: the IS-A hierarchy
 - A IS-A B (or A ISA B)
 - B subsumes A

Hyponyms and Instances

- WordNet has both classes and instances.
- An instance is an individual, a proper noun that is a unique entity
 - San Francisco is an instance of city
 - But city is a class
 - city is a hyponym of municipality...location...

Meronymy

- The part-whole relation
 - A leg is part of a chair; a wheel is part of a car.
- Wheel is a meronym of car, and car is a holonym of wheel.

Computing with a Thesaurus

WordNet

WordNet 3.0

- A hierarchically organized lexical database
- On-line thesaurus + aspects of a dictionary
 - Some other languages available or under development
 - (Arabic, Finnish, German, Portuguese...)

Category	Unique Strings
Noun	117,798
Verb	11,529
Adjective	22,479
Adverb	4,481

Senses of "bass" in Wordnet

Noun

- S: (n) bass (the lowest part of the musical range)
- S: (n) bass, bass part (the lowest part in polyphonic music)
- S: (n) bass, basso (an adult male singer with the lowest voice)
- S: (n) sea bass, bass (the lean flesh of a saltwater fish of the family Serranidae)
- S: (n) <u>freshwater bass</u>, **bass** (any of various North American freshwater fish with lean flesh (especially of the genus Micropterus))
- S: (n) bass, bass voice, basso (the lowest adult male singing voice)
- <u>S: (n)</u> bass (the member with the lowest range of a family of musical instruments)
- <u>S: (n)</u> bass (nontechnical name for any of numerous edible marine and freshwater spiny-finned fishes)

Adjective

• S: (adj) bass, deep (having or denoting a low vocal or instrumental range) "a deep voice"; "a bass voice is lower than a baritone voice"; "a bass clarinet"

How is "sense" defined in WordNet?

- The synset (synonym set), the set of near-synonyms, instantiates a sense or concept, with a gloss
- Example: chump as a noun with the gloss:
 "a person who is gullible and easy to take advantage of"
- This sense of "chump" is shared by 9 words:

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chump<sup>1</sup>, fool<sup>2</sup>, gull<sup>1</sup>, mark<sup>9</sup>, patsy<sup>1</sup>, fall guy<sup>1</sup>, sucker<sup>1</sup>, soft touch<sup>1</sup>, mug<sup>2</sup>
```

- Each of these senses have this same gloss
 - (Not every sense; sense 2 of gull is the aquatic bird)

WordNet Hypernym Hierarchy for "bass"

- S: (n) bass, basso (an adult male singer with the lowest voice)
 - direct hypernym | inherited hypernym | sister term
 - S: (n) singer, vocalist, vocalizer, vocaliser (a person who sings)
 - S: (n) musician, instrumentalist, player (someone who plays a musical instrument (as a profession))
 - S: (n) performer, performing artist (an entertainer who performs a dramatic or musical work for an audience)
 - S: (n) entertainer (a person who tries to please or amuse)
 - S: (n) person, individual, someone, somebody, mortal, soul (a human being) "there was too much for one person to do"
 - <u>S:</u> (n) <u>organism</u>, <u>being</u> (a living thing that has (or can develop) the ability to act or function independently)
 - S: (n) living thing, animate thing (a living (or once living) entity)
 - S: (n) whole, unit (an assemblage of parts that is regarded as a single entity) "how big is that part compared to the whole?"; "the team is a unit"
 - S: (n) object, physical object (a tangible and visible entity; an entity that can cast a shadow) "it was full of rackets, balls and other objects"
 - <u>S:</u> (n) <u>physical entity</u> (an entity that has physical existence)
 - S: (n) entity (that which is perceived or known or inferred to have its own distinct existence (living or nonliving))

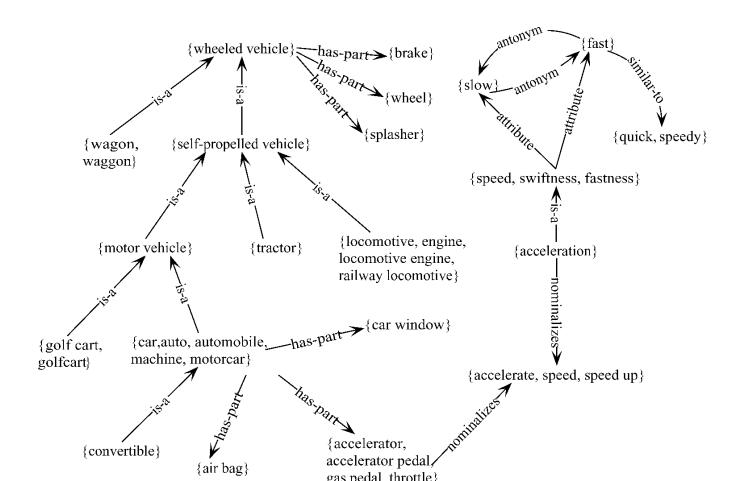
WordNet Noun Relations

| Relation | Also Called | Definition | Example |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hypernym | Superordinate | From concepts to superordinates | $breakfast^1 \rightarrow meal^1$ |
| Hyponym | Subordinate | From concepts to subtypes | $meal^1 \rightarrow lunch^1$ |
| Instance Hypernym | Instance | From instances to their concepts | $Austen^1 \rightarrow author^1$ |
| Instance Hyponym | Has-Instance | From concepts to concept instances | $composer^1 \rightarrow Bach^1$ |
| Member Meronym | Has-Member | From groups to their members | $faculty^2 \rightarrow professor^1$ |
| Member Holonym | Member-Of | From members to their groups | $copilot^1 \rightarrow crew^1$ |
| Part Meronym | Has-Part | From wholes to parts | $table^2 \rightarrow leg^3$ |
| Part Holonym | Part-Of | From parts to wholes | $course^7 \rightarrow meal^1$ |
| Substance Meronym | | From substances to their subparts | $water^1 \rightarrow oxygen^1$ |
| Substance Holonym | | From parts of substances to wholes | $gin^1 \rightarrow martini^1$ |
| Antonym | | Semantic opposition between lemmas | $leader^1 \iff follower^1$ |
| Derivationally | | Lemmas w/same morphological root | $destruction^1 \iff destroy$ |
| Related Form | | | |

WordNet VerbRelations

| Relation | Definition | Example |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Hypernym | From events to superordinate events | $fly^9 \rightarrow travel^5$ |
| Troponym | From events to subordinate event | $walk^1 \rightarrow stroll^1$ |
| | (often via specific manner) | |
| Entails | From verbs (events) to the verbs (events) they entail | $snore^1 \rightarrow sleep^1$ |
| Antonym | Semantic opposition between lemmas | $increase^1 \iff decrease^1$ |
| Derivationally | Lemmas with same morphological root | $destroy^1 \iff destruction^1$ |
| Related Form | | |

WordNet: Viewed as a graph



"Supersenses"

The top level hypernyms in the hierarchy

T7.....

(counts from Schneider and Smith 2013's Streusel corpus)

| | | Verb |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| GROUP 1469 place BODY | 87 hair | STATIVE 2922 is |
| PERSON 1202 people STATE | 56 pain | COGNITION 1093 know |
| ARTIFACT 971 car NATURAL (| OBJ. 54 <i>flower</i> | COMMUNIC.* 974 recommend |
| COGNITION 771 way RELATION | 35 portion | SOCIAL 944 use |
| FOOD 766 food SUBSTANC | E 34 oil | MOTION $602 go$ |
| ACT 700 service FEELING | 34 discomfort | POSSESSION 309 pay |
| LOCATION 638 area PROCESS | 28 process | CHANGE 274 fix |
| TIME 530 day MOTIVE | 25 reason | EMOTION 249 love |
| EVENT 431 experience PHENOMEN | NON 23 result | PERCEPTION 143 see |
| COMMUNIC.* 417 review SHAPE | 6 square | CONSUMPTION 93 have |
| POSSESSION 339 price PLANT | 5 tree | BODY 82 getdone |
| ATTRIBUTE 205 quality OTHER | 2 stuff | CREATION 64 cook |
| QUANTITY 102 amount | | CONTACT 46 put |
| animal 88 dog | | COMPETITION 11 win |
| | | WEATHER 0 — |

Supersenses

 A word's supersense can be a useful coarse-grained representation of word meaning for NLP tasks

I $googled_{communication}$ restaurants_{GROUP} in the $area_{LOCATION}$ and Fuji_Sushi_{GROUP} came_up_communication and reviews_{COMMUNICATION} were stative great so I made_ a carry_out_possession_order_communication

WordNet 3.0

- Where it is:
 - http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn
- Libraries
 - Python: WordNet from NLTK
 - http://www.nltk.org/Home
 - Java:
 - JWNL, extJWNL on sourceforge

MeSH: Medical Subject Headings thesaurus from the National Library of Medicine

Synset

- MeSH (Medical Subject Headings)
 - 177,000 entry terms that correspond to 26,142 biomedical "headings"

Hemoglobins

Entry Terms: Eryhem, Ferrous Hemoglobin, Hemoglobin

Definition: The oxygen-carrying proteins of ERYTHROCYTES.

They are found in all vertebrates and some invertebrates.

The number of globin subunits in the hemoglobin quaternary structure differs between species. Structures range from monomeric to a variety of multimeric arrangements

The MeSH Hierarchy

o Pharmacoutical Propagations [D26] +

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Amino Acids, Peptides, and Proteins [D12]
                                             Proteins [D12.776]
1. + Anatomy [A]
                                               Blood Proteins [D12.776.124]
2. + Organisms [B]
                                                Acute-Phase Proteins [D12.776.124.050] +
3. + Diseases [C]
                                                Anion Exchange Protein 1, Erythrocyte [D12.776.124.078]
4. - Chemicals and Drugs [D]
                                                Ankyrins [D12.776.124.080]
      • Inorganic Chemicals [D01] +
      • Organic Chemicals [D02] +
                                                beta 2-Glycoprotein I [D12.776.124.117]
      • Heterocyclic Compounds [D03] +
                                                Blood Coagulation Factors [D12.776.124.125] +
      • Polycyclic Compounds [D04] +
                                                Cholesterol Ester Transfer Proteins [D12.776.124.197]
      • Macromolecular Substances [D05] +
                                                Fibrin [D12.776.124.270] +
       Hormones, Hormone Substitutes, and
                                                Glycophorin [D12.776.124.300]
      • Enzymes and Coenzymes [D08] +
                                                Hemocyanin [D12.776.124.337]
      • Carbohydrates [D09] +
                                             ► Hemoglobins [D12.776.124.400]
      • Lipids [D10] +

    Amino Acids, Peptides, and Proteins

                                                Carboxyhemoglobin [D12.776.124.400.141]
      • Nucleic Acids, Nucleotides, and Nucl
                                                Erythrocruorins [D12.776.124.400.220]
       Complex Mixtures [D20] +
      • Biological Factors [D23] +
      • Biomedical and Dental Materials [D25] +
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Uses of the MeSH Ontology

- Provide synonyms ("entry terms")
 - E.g., glucose and dextrose
- Provide hypernyms (from the hierarchy)
 - E.g., glucose ISA monosaccharide
- Indexing in MEDLINE/PubMED database
 - NLM's bibliographic database:
 - 20 million journal articles
 - Each article hand-assigned 10-20 MeSH terms

Computing with a thesaurus

Word Similarity:
Thesaurus Methods

Word Similarity

- Synonymy: a binary relation
 - Two words are either synonymous or not
- Similarity (or distance): a looser metric
 - Two words are more similar if they share more features of meaning
- Similarity is properly a relation between senses
 - The word "bank" is not similar to the word "slope"
 - Bank¹ is similar to fund³
 - Bank² is similar to slope⁵
- But we'll compute similarity over both words and senses

Why word similarity

- A practical component in lots of NLP tasks
 - Question answering
 - Natural language generation
 - Automatic essay grading
 - Plagiarism detection
- A theoretical component in many linguistic and cognitive tasks
 - Historical semantics
 - Models of human word learning
 - Morphology and grammar induction

Word similarity and word relatedness

- We often distinguish word similarity from word relatedness
 - Similar words: near-synonyms
 - Related words: can be related any way
 - car, bicycle: similar
 - car, gasoline: related, not similar

Two classes of similarity algorithms

- Thesaurus-based algorithms
 - Are words "nearby" in hypernym hierarchy?
 - Do words have similar glosses (definitions)?
- Distributional algorithms
 - Do words have similar distributional contexts?

Path based similarity

8 medium of exchange scale

6 currency money Richter scale

coinage fund

2 nickel dime

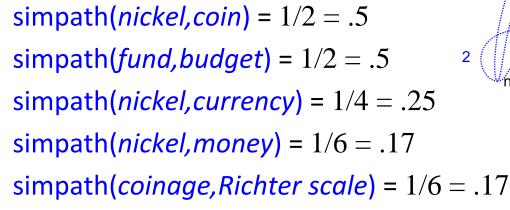
- Two concepts (senses/synsets) are similar if they are near each other in the thesaurus hierarchy
 - =have a short path between them
 - concepts have path 1 to themselves

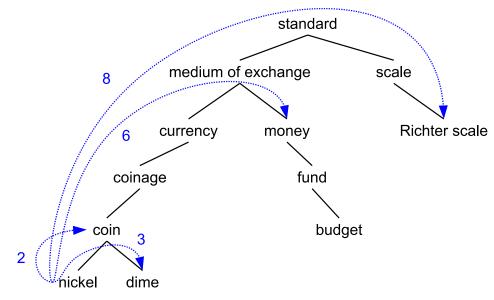
Refinements to path-based similarity

- $pathlen(c_1, c_2) = 1 + number of edges in the shortest path in the hypernym graph between sense nodes <math>c_1$ and c_2
- ranges from 0 to 1 (identity)
- simpath $(c_1, c_2) = \frac{1}{\text{pathlen}(c_1, c_2)}$
- wordsim $(w_1, w_2) = \max_{c_1 \in \text{senses}(w_1), c_2 \in \text{senses}(w_2)} \sin(c_1, c_2)$

Example: path-based similarity

$$simpath(c_1, c_2) = 1/pathlen(c_1, c_2)$$





Problem with basic path-based similarity

- Assumes each link represents a uniform distance
 - But *nickel* to *money* seems to us to be closer than *nickel* to standard
 - Nodes high in the hierarchy are very abstract
- We instead want a metric that
 - Represents the cost of each edge independently
 - Words connected only through abstract nodes
 - are less similar

Information content similarity metrics

Resnik 1995

- Let's define P(c) as:
 - \bullet The probability that a randomly selected word in a corpus is an instance of concept c
 - Formally: there is a distinct random variable, ranging over words, associated with each concept in the hierarchy
 - for a given concept, each observed noun is either
 - a member of that concept with probability P(c)
 - not a member of that concept with probability 1-P(c)
 - All words are members of the root node (Entity)
 - P(root)=1
 - The lower a node in hierarchy, the lower its probability

Information content similarity

geological-formation

cave

shore

entity

natural elevation

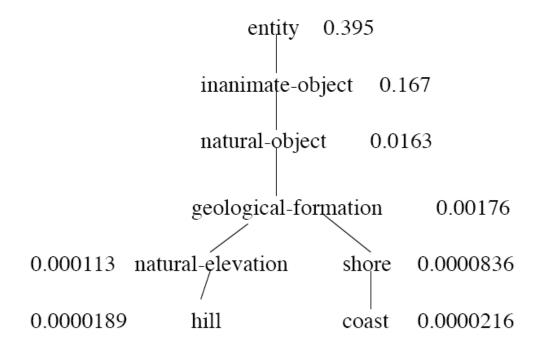
- Train by counting in a corpus
 - Each instance of hill counts toward frequency of natural elevation, geological formation, entity, etc hill ridge grotto coast
 - Let words(c) be the set of all words that are children of node c
 - words("geo-formation") = {hill,ridge,grotto,coast,cave,shore,natural elevation}
 - words("natural elevation") = {hill, ridge}

$$P(c) = \frac{w^{\hat{1}} \ words(c)}{N}$$

Information content similarity

WordNet hierarchy augmented with probabilities P(c)

D. Lin. 1998. An Information-Theoretic Definition of Similarity. ICML 1998



Information content and probability

- The **self-information** of an event, also called its **surprisal**:
 - how surprised we are to know it; how much we learn by knowing it.
 - The more surprising something is, the more it tells us when it happens
 - We'll measure self-information in bits.

$$I(w) = -log2 P(w)$$

- I flip a coin; P(heads)= 0.5
- How many bits of information do I learn by flipping it?
 - I(heads) = -log2(0.5) = -log2(1/2) = log2(2) = 1 bit
- I flip a biased coin: P(heads)= 0.8 I don't learn as much
- I(heads) = -log2(0.8) = -log2(0.8) = .32 bits

Information content: definitions

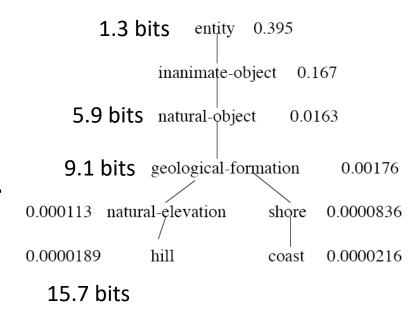
• Information content:

$$IC(c) = -log P(c)$$

 Most informative subsumer (Lowest common subsumer)

$$LCS(c_1,c_2) =$$

The most informative (lowest) node in the hierarchy subsuming both c_1 and c_2



Using information content for similarity: the Resnik method

Philip Resnik. 1995. Using Information Content to Evaluate Semantic Similarity in a Taxonomy. IJCAI 1995. Philip Resnik. 1999. Semantic Similarity in a Taxonomy: An Information-Based Measure and its Application to Problems of Ambiguity in Natural Language. JAIR 11, 95-130.

- The similarity between two words is related to their common information
- The more two words have in common, the more similar they are
- Resnik: measure common information as:
 - The information content of the most informative (lowest) subsumer (MIS/LCS) of the two nodes
 - $sim_{resnik}(c_1,c_2) = -log P(LCS(c_1,c_2))$

Dekang Lin method

Dekang Lin. 1998. An Information-Theoretic Definition of Similarity. ICML

- Intuition: Similarity between A and B is not just what they have in common
- The more differences between A and B, the less similar they are:
 - Commonality: the more A and B have in common, the more similar they are
 - Difference: the more differences between A and B, the less similar
- Commonality: IC(common(A,B))
- Difference: IC(description(A,B)-IC(common(A,B))

Dekang Lin similarity theorem

 The similarity between A and B is measured by the ratio between the amount of information needed to state the commonality of A and B and the information needed to fully describe what A and B are

$$sim_{Lin}(A, B) \sqcup \frac{IC(common(A, B))}{IC(description(A, B))}$$

Lin (altering Resnik) defines IC(common(A,B)) as 2 x information of the LCS

$$sim_{Lin}(c_1, c_2) = \frac{2\log P(LCS(c_1, c_2))}{\log P(c_1) + \log P(c_2)}$$

Lin similarity function

$$sim_{Lin}(A, B) = \frac{2 \log P(LCS(c_1, c_2))}{\log P(c_1) + \log P(c_2)}$$

$$sim_{Lin}(hill, coast) = \frac{2 \log P(geological-formation)}{\log P(hill) + \log P(coast)}$$

$$= \frac{2 \ln 0.00176}{\ln 0.0000189 + \ln 0.0000216}$$
$$= .59$$

The (extended) Lesk Algorithm

- A thesaurus-based measure that looks at glosses
- Two concepts are similar if their glosses contain similar words
 - Drawing paper: paper that is specially prepared for use in drafting
 - Decal: the art of transferring designs from specially prepared paper to a wood or glass or metal surface
- For each *n*-word phrase that's in both glosses
 - Add a score of n²
 - Paper and specially prepared for $1 + 2^2 = 5$
 - Compute overlap also for other relations
 - glosses of hypernyms and hyponyms

Summary: thesaurus-based similarity

$$sim_{\text{path}}(c_1, c_2) = \frac{1}{pathlen(c_1, c_2)}$$

$$sim_{\text{resnik}}(c_1, c_2) = -\log P(LCS(c_1, c_2)) \quad sim_{\text{lin}}(c_1, c_2) = \frac{2\log P(LCS(c_1, c_2))}{\log P(c_1) + \log P(c_2)}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{sim}_{\text{jiangconrath}}(c_1, c_2) = \frac{1}{\log P(c_1) + \log P(c_2) - 2 \log P(LCS(c_1, c_2))} \\ & \text{sim}_{eLesk}(c_1, c_2) = & \text{ overlap}(\text{gloss}(r(c_1)), \text{gloss}(q(c_2))) \end{aligned}$$

 $r,q\hat{l}$ RELS

Libraries for computing thesaurus-based similarity

- NLTK
 - http://nltk.github.com/api/nltk.corpus.reader.html?highlight=similarity nltk.corpus.reader.WordNetCorpusReader.res_similarity

- WordNet::Similarity
 - http://wn-similarity.sourceforge.net/
 - Web-based interface:
 - http://marimba.d.umn.edu/cgi-bin/similarity/similarity.cgi

Evaluating similarity

- Intrinsic Evaluation:
 - Correlation between algorithm and human word similarity ratings
 - Wordsim353: 353 noun pairs rated 0-10. sim(plane,car)=5.77
- Extrinsic (task-based, end-to-end) Evaluation:
 - Question Answering
 - Spell Checking
 - Essay grading
 - Taking TOEFL multiple-choice vocabulary tests
 - <u>Levied</u> is closest in meaning to: imposed, believed, requested, correlated