



Feature Overlap/ Feature Interaction

How overlapping features work in maxent models



Feature Overlap

- Maxent models handle overlapping features well.
- Unlike a NB model, there is no double counting!

Empirical

	A	a
B	2	1
b	2	1

	A	a
B		
b		

All = 1

	A	a
B	1/4	1/4
b	1/4	1/4

	A	a
B		
b		

A = 2/3

	A	a
B	1/3	1/6
b	1/3	1/6

	A	a
B		
b		

A = 2/3

	A	a
B	1/3	1/6
b	1/3	1/6

	A	a
B		
b		

	A	a
B	λ_A	
b	λ_A	

	A	a
B	$\lambda'_A + \lambda''_A$	
b	$\lambda'_A + \lambda''_A$	



Example: Named Entity Feature Overlap

Grace is correlated with PERSON, but does not add much evidence **on top of** already knowing prefix features.

Local Context

	Prev	Cur	Next
State	Other	???	???
Word	at	Grace	Road
Tag	IN	NNP	NNP
Sig	x	Xx	Xx

Feature Weights

Feature Type	Feature	PERS	LOC
Previous word	at	-0.73	0.94
Current word	Grace	0.03	0.00
Beginning bigram	<C	0.45	-0.04
Current POS tag	NNP	0.47	0.45
Prev and cur tags	IN NNP	-0.10	0.14
Previous state	Other	-0.70	-0.92
Current signature	Xx	0.80	0.46
Prev state, cur sig	O-Xx	0.68	0.37
Prev-cur-next sig	x-Xx-Xx	-0.69	0.37
P. state - p-cur sig	O-x-Xx	-0.20	0.82
...			
Total:		-0.58	2.68



Feature Interaction

- Maxent models handle overlapping features well, but do not automatically model feature interactions.

Empirical

	A	a
B	1	1
b	1	0

	A	a
B		
b		

All = 1

	A	a
B	1/4	1/4
b	1/4	1/4

	A	a
B		
b		

A = 2/3

	A	a
B	1/3	1/6
b	1/3	1/6

	A	a
B		
b		

B = 2/3

	A	a
B	4/9	2/9
b	2/9	1/9

	A	a
B	0	0
b	0	0

	A	a
B	λ_A	
b	λ_A	

	A	a
B	$\lambda_A + \lambda_B$	λ_B
b	λ_A	



Feature Interaction

- If you want interaction terms, you have to add them:

Empirical

	A	a
B	1	1
b	1	0

	A	a
B		
b		

$$A = 2/3$$

	A	a
B	1/3	1/6
b	1/3	1/6

	A	a
B		
b		

$$B = 2/3$$

	A	a
B	4/9	2/9
b	2/9	1/9

	A	a
B		
b		

$$AB = 1/3$$

	A	a
B	1/3	1/3
b	1/3	0

- A disjunctive feature would also have done it (alone):

	A	a
B		
b		

	A	a
B	1/3	1/3
b	1/3	0



Quiz Question

- Suppose we have a 1 feature maxent model built over observed data as shown.
- What is the constructed model's probability distribution over the four possible outcomes?

Empirical		
	A	a
B	2	1
b	2	1

Features		
	A	a
B		
b		

Expectations

Probabilities

	A	a
B		
b		



Feature Interaction

- For loglinear/logistic regression models in statistics, it is standard to do a greedy stepwise search over the space of all possible interaction terms.
- This combinatorial space is exponential in size, but that's okay as most statistics models only have 4–8 features.
- In NLP, our models commonly use hundreds of thousands of features, so that's not okay.
- Commonly, interaction terms are added by hand based on linguistic intuitions.



Example: NER Interaction

Previous-state and current-signature have interactions, e.g. $P=\text{PERS}-C=\text{Xx}$ indicates $C=\text{PERS}$ much more strongly than $C=\text{Xx}$ and $P=\text{PERS}$ independently.

This feature type allows the model to capture this interaction.

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