CMPT-413
Computational Linguistics

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Lexical Semantics

- So far, we have listed **words** in our **lexicon** or **vocabulary** assuming a single meaning per word:
  Consider n-grams $P(w_i \mid w_{i-2}, w_{i-1}) = P(Bank \mid on, Commerce)$ or
  prepositional phrase attachment *if p=on and n2=bank then change N to V*
- Consider . . . *withdraw twenty dollars on the bank* (correct = V)
  vs.
  . . . *withdraw the troops on the bank* (correct = N)
- The same word *bank* means two different things but we cannot distinguish between them using the traditional definition of word.

Lexical Semantics

- To deal with this issue, we combine the *spelling* or *pronunciation* of a word and the *meaning*.
  In the *lexicon* we now store **lexemes** instead of words. A lexeme pairs a particular spelling or pronunciation with a particular meaning.
- The meaning part of a lexeme is called a **sense**. For CL, our interest is in relations between lexemes or disambiguating different senses of a word.
  word: bank $\rightarrow$ lexeme: **bank**^{1} *OR* word: bank $\rightarrow$ lexeme: **bank**^{2}
- Note that meanings are often not definitions, but often are simple listings of compatible lexemes.
  cf. dictionary defns: *red, n.* the color of blood or ruby; *blood, n.* red liquid circulating in animals

Homonyms

- Homonyms: *words that have the same form but different meanings*
  1. *Instead, the chemical* plant *was found in violation of several environmental laws*
  2. *Stanley formed an expedition to find a rare* plant *found along the Amazon river*
- Same *orthographic* form: *plant* but two senses: **plant**^{1} and **plant**^{2}

Homonyms

- Text vs. speech: fly-casting for *bass* vs. rhythmic *bass* chords
  These cases are homonyms in text, but not in speech.
  Referred to as **homographs**
- Speech vs. text: *would* vs. *wood*
  These cases are not homonyms in text, but easily confused in speech. Referred to as **homophones**
- Note that this problem in some cases can be solved using *part of speech tagging*
  Can you think of a case which cannot be solved using POS tagging?

Applications

- Spelling correction: homophones: *weather* vs. *whether*
- Speech recognition: homophones: *to*, *two*, *too*. Also homonyms (see *n*-gram e.g.)
- Text to speech: homographs: *bass* vs. *bass*
- Information retrieval: homonyms: *latex*

Polysemy

- Consider the homonym: *bank* → commercial **bank**^{1} vs. river **bank**^{2}
- Now consider
  1. *A PCFG can be trained using derivation trees from a tree* bank *annotated by human experts*
- Is this a new sense of *bank*?

Polysemy

- Senses can be derived from a particular lexeme. This process is known as **polysemy**
  In previous case we would say that the use of *bank* is a sense derived from commercial **bank**[1]
- In some cases, splitting into different lexemes has other supporting evidence: **bank**[1] has Italian origin vs. **bank**[2] has Scandinavian origin
  1. *A PCFG can be trained using a* bank *of derivation trees called a tree-bank annotated by human experts*
- How can we tell between homonyms and polysemous uses of a word?

Zeugma

- Consider the case for a verb like *serve*
  1. *Does United serve breakfast?*
  2. *Does United serve Philadelphia?*
  3. *Does United serve breakfast and dinner?*
  4. *#Does United serve breakfast and Philadelphia?*

Word Sense Disambiguation

- Consider a noun like *bank*
  1. *How many senses does it have?*
  2. *How are these senses related?*
  3. *How can they be reliably distinguished?*
- For NLP software, among these three questions, typically at runtime we need to automatically find the answer to the last question: given a word in context, map it to the correct lexeme: **word-sense disambiguation**

Synonyms

- Synonyms: Different lexemes with the same meaning
  1. *How big/large is that plane?*
  2. *Would I be flying on a big/large or small plane?*
- Synonyms clash with polysemous meanings
  1. *Seema is my big sister*
  2. *#Seema is my large sister*

WordNet

- `WordNet` is an electronic database of word relationships, handcrafted from scratch by researchers at Princeton University (George Miller, Christine Fellbaum, et al.)
- WordNet contains 3 databases: for verbs, nouns and one for adjectives and adverbs

Category	Unique Forms	Number of Senses
Noun	94474	116317
Verb	10319	22066
Adjective	20170	29881
Adverb	4546	5677

WordNet

- Ask the question: how many senses per noun or verb? The distribution of senses follows Zipf's (2nd) Law.
- WordNet provides multiple lexeme entries for each word and for each part of speech,
  e.g. *plant* as noun has 3 senses; *plant* as verb has 2 senses
- WordNet also provides *domain-independent* lexical relations such as IS-A, HasMember, MemberOf, ...

WordNet: noun relations

Relation	Definition	Example
Hypernym	this is a kind of	*breakfast* → *meal*
Hyponym	this has a specific instance	*meal* → *lunch*
Has-Member	this has a member	*faculty* → *professor*
Member-Of	this is member of a group	*copilot* → *crew*
Has-Part	this has a part	*table* → *leg*
Part-Of	this is part of	*course* → *meal*
Antonym	this is an opposite of	*leader* → *follower*

WordNet: verb relations

Relation	Definition	Example
Hypernym	this event is a kind of	*fly* → *travel*
Tropynym	this event has a subtype	*walk* → *stroll*
Entails	this event entails	*snore* → *sleep*
Antonym	this event is opposite of	*increase* → *decrease*

WordNet: example from ver1.7.1

Sense1: Canada
⇒North American country,North American nation
⇒country, state, land
⇒administrative district,administrative division,territorial division
⇒district, territory
⇒region
⇒location
⇒entity, physical thing

WordNet: example from ver1.7.1

Sense 3: Vancouver
- ⇒city, metropolis, urban center
  - ⇒municipality
    - ⇒urban area
      - ⇒geographical area
        - ⇒region
          - ⇒location
            - ⇒entity, physical thing
    - ⇒administrative district, territorial division
      - ⇒district, territory
        - ⇒region
          - ⇒location
            - ⇒entity, physical thing
- ⇒port
  - ⇒geographic point
    - ⇒point
      - ⇒location
        - ⇒entity, physical thing

WordNet

- A **synset** in WordNet is a list of synonyms (interchangeable words)
- { `chump, fish, fool, gull, mark, patsy, fall guy, sucker, schlemiel, shlemiel, soft touch, mug` }
- How can we use this information like synsets, hypernyms, etc. from WordNet to benefit NLP applications?
- Consider one example: PP attachment, words plus word classes extracted from the hypernym hierarchy increase accuracy from 84% to 88% (Stetina and Nagao, 1998)

WordNet

- Another example of WordNet used in NLP applications: **selectional restrictions**
- We have considered subcategorization:
  VP-with-NP-complement → *V(eat) NP* "eat six bowls of rice "
  But not selectional restrictions of the verb itself: " *eat tomorrow* "
  Consider *what do you want to eat tomorrow*
- We can use the **synset** { `food, nutrient` } to describe the NP argument of *eat* – then the 60K lexemes under these nodes in the WordNet hierarchy will be acceptable.
  (however, what about " *eat my shorts* ")
  → several other applications have been explored