

Incorporating Bigram Constraints into an LR Table

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Abstract

In this paper, we propose a method to construct a bigram LR table to incorporate bigram constraints into an LR table. An LR table which incorporates bigram constraints is called a bigram LR table. Using the bigram LR table, it is possible for a GLR parser to make use of both bigram and CFG constraints in natural language processing.

A method for constructing bigram LR tables is proposed. Applying the resultant bigram LR table to our GLR method has the following advantages:

1. A language model utilizing a bigram LR table has lower perplexity than a bigram language model, since local constraints (bigram) and global constraints (CFG) are combined in the single bigram LR table at the same time.
2. Bigram constraints are easily acquired from a given corpus. Therefore data sparseness is not likely to arise.

The former advantage leads to a reduction in complexity, and as the result, produces better performance for GLR parsing.

Our experiments demonstrate the effectiveness of our method.

1 Introduction

In natural language processing, stochastic language models are commonly used for lexical and syntactic disambiguation (Fujisaki et al., 1991; Franz, 1996). Stochastic language models are also helpful in reducing the complexity of speech and language processing by way of providing probabilistic linguistic constraints (Lee, 1989).

N-gram models (Jelinek, 1990), including bigram and trigram models, are the most commonly used method of applying local probabilistic constraints. However, context-free grammars (CFGs) produce more global linguistic constraints than N-gram models. It seems better to combine both local and global constraints and use them both concurrently in natural language processing. The reason why N-gram models are preferred over CFGs is that N-gram constraints are easily acquired from a given corpus. However, the larger N is, the more serious the problem of data sparseness becomes.

CFGs are commonly employed in syntactic parsing as global linguistic constraints, since many efficient parsing algorithms are available. GLR (Generalized LR) is one such parsing algorithm that uses an LR table, into which CFG constraints are precompiled in advance (Knuth, 1965; Tomita, 1986).

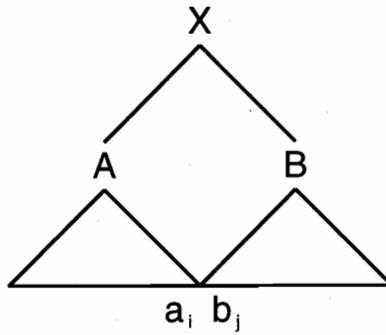


Figure 1: Connection check by CFG

Therefore if we can incorporate N-gram constraints into an LR table, we can make concurrent use of both local and global linguistic constraints in GLR parsing.

In the following section, we will propose a method that incorporates bigram constraints into an LR table. The advantages of the method are summarized as follows:

First, it is expected that this method produces a lower perplexity than that for a bigram language model, since it is possible to utilize both local (bigram) and global (CFG) constraints in the LR table. We will evidence this reduction in perplexity by considering states in LR table for the case of GLR parsing.

Secondly, bigram constraints are easily acquired from smaller-sized corpora. Accordingly, data sparseness is not likely to arise.

2 CFG, Connection Matrix and LR table

2.1 Relation between CFG and Connection Constraints

Figure 1 represents a situation in which a_i and b_j are adjacent each other, where a_i belongs to Set_I ($i = 1, \dots, I$) and b_j belongs to Set_J ($j = 1, \dots, J$). Set_I and Set_J are defined by $last1(A)$ and $first1(B)$ (Aho et al., 1986), respectively. If $a \in Set_I$ and $b \in Set_J$ happen not to be able to occur in this order, it becomes a non-trivial task to express this adjacency restriction within the framework of CFG.

One solution to this problem is to introduce a new nonterminal symbol A_i for each a_i and a nonterminal symbol B_j for each b_j . Introducing new nonterminal symbols A_i and B_j , we replace the rule $X \rightarrow A B$ with a set of rules of $\{X \rightarrow A_i B_j \mid \text{for all pairs } (A_i, B_j) \text{ where } b_j \text{ can follow } a_i\}$. After this rule replacement, the order of the number of rules will become $I \times J$ in the worst case. The introduction of such new nonterminal symbols leads to an increase in grammar rules, which not only makes the LR table very large in size, but also diminishes efficiency of the GLR parsing method.

The second solution is to augment $X \rightarrow A B$ with a procedure that checks the connection between a_i and b_j . This solution can avoid the problem of the expansion of CFG rules, but we have to take care

	b_1	b_2	\dots	b_j	\dots	b_l
a_1						
a_2		1		1		
\vdots						
a_i		1		0		
\vdots						
a_l						

Figure 2: Connection matrix

of the information flow from the bottom leaves to the upper nodes in the tree, A , B , and X .

Neither the first nor the second solution are preferable, in terms of both efficiency of GLR parsing and description of CFG rules. Additionally, it is a much easier task to describe local connection constraints between adjacent two terminal symbols by way of a connection matrix such as in Figure 2, than to express these constraints within the CFG.

The connection matrix in Figure 2 is defined as:

$$Connect(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } b_j \text{ can follow } a_i \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

The best solution seems to be to develop a method that can combine both a CFG and a connection matrix, avoiding the expansion of CFG rules. Consequently, the size of the LR table will become smaller and we will get better GLR parsing performance. In the following section, we will propose one such method.

2.2 Relation between the LR Table and Connection Matrix

First we discuss the relation between the LR table and a connection matrix. The action part of an LR table consists of lookahead symbols and states. Let a shift action $sh\ m$ be in state l with the lookahead symbol a . After the GLR parser executes action $sh\ m$, the symbol a is pushed onto the top of the stack and the GLR parser shifts to the state m . Suppose there is an action A in state m with lookahead b (see Figure 3). The action A is executable if $Connect(a, b) \neq 0$ (b can follow a), whereas if $Connect(a, b) = 0$ (b cannot follow a), the action A in state m with lookahead b is not executable and we can remove it from the LR table as an invalid action. Removing such invalid actions enables us to incorporate connection constraints into the LR table in addition to the implicit CFG constraints.

In section 3.2, we will propose a method that integrates both bigram and CFG constraints into an LR table. After this integration process, we obtain a table called a bigram LR table.

Figure 3: LR table and Connection Constraints

3 Integration of Bigram and CFG Constraints into an LR Table

3.1 The Definition of a Probabilistic Connection Matrix

A close relation exists between bigrams and connection matrices, in that the bigram probability $P(b|a)$ corresponds to the matrix element of $\text{Connect}(a, b)$. A connection matrix incorporating bigram probabilities is called a probabilistic connection matrix, in which $\text{Connect}(a, b) = 0$ still means b cannot follow a , but instead of connection matrix entries having a binary value of 0 or 1, a probability is associated with each element. This is then used to construct a probabilistic LR table.

The N-gram model is the most commonly used probabilistic language model, and it assumes that a symbol sequence can be described by a higher order Markov process. The simplest N-gram model with $N = 2$ is called a bigram model, and approximates the probability of a string $\mathbf{X} = x_1x_2x_3 \cdots x_n$ as the product of conditional probabilities:

$$P(\mathbf{X}) = P(x_1|\#)P(x_2|x_1)\cdots P(x_n|x_{n-1})P(\$|x_n) \quad (2)$$

In the above expression, “#” indicates the sentence beginning marker and “\$” indicates the sentence ending marker. The above bigram model can be represented in a *probabilistic connection matrix* defined as follows.

DEFINITION 1 (*probabilistic connection matrix*)

Let $G = (V_N, V_T, P, S)$ be a context-free grammar. For $\forall a, b \in V_T$ (the set of terminal symbols), the *probabilistic connection matrix* named P_{Connect} is defined as follows.

$$PConnect(a, b) = P(b|a) \quad (3)$$

where $P(b|a)$ is a conditional probability and $\sum_{b \in V_T} P(b|a) = 1$.

$PConnect(a, b) = 0$ means that a and b cannot occur consecutively in the given order.
 $PConnect(a, b) \neq 0$ means b can follow a with probability $P(b|a)$.

3.2 An algorithm to construct an bigram LR table

An algorithm to construct a probabilistic LR table, combining both bigram and CFG constraints, is given in Algorithm 1:

Algorithm 1

Input: A CFG $G = (V_N, V_T, P, S)$ and a probabilistic connection matrix $PConnect$.

Output: An LR table T with CFG and bigram constraints.

Method:

Step 1 Generate an LR table T_0 from the given CFG G .

Step 2 Removal of actions:

For each shift action $sh\ m$ with lookahead a in the LR table T_0 , delete actions in the state m with lookahead b if $PConnect(a, b) = 0$.

Step 3 Constraint Propagation (Tanaka et al., 1994):

Repeat the following two procedures until no further actions can be removed:

1. Remove actions which have no succeeding action,
2. Remove actions which have no preceding action.

Step 4 Compact the LR table if possible.

Step 5 Incorporation of bigram constraints into the LR table:

For each shift action $sh\ m$ with lookahead a in the LR table T_0 , let

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^N PConnect(a, b_i)$$

where $\{b_i : i = 1, \dots, N\}$ is the set of lookaheads for state m . For each action A_j in state m with lookahead b_i , assign a probability p to action A_j :

$$p = \frac{P(b_i|a)}{P \times n} = \frac{PConnect(a, b_i)}{P \times n}$$

where n is the number of conflict actions in state m with lookahead b_i . The denominator is clearly a normalization factor.

Step 6 For each shift action A with lookahead a in state 0, assign A a probability $p = P(a|\#)$, where “#” is the sentence beginning marker.

(1)	$S \rightarrow X Y$	(6)	$A \rightarrow a1$
(2)	$X \rightarrow A$	(7)	$A \rightarrow a2$
(3)	$X \rightarrow A B$	(8)	$B \rightarrow b1$
(4)	$Y \rightarrow A$	(9)	$B \rightarrow b2$
(5)	$Y \rightarrow b1 A$		

Figure 4: Grammar G_1

	$a1$	$a2$	$b1$	$b2$	\$
#	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
$a1$	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
$a2$	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.7
$b1$	0.0	0.1	0.9	0.0	0.0
$b2$	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0

Figure 5: Probabilistic connection matrix M_1

Step 7 Assign a probability $p = 1/n$ to each action A in state m with lookahead symbol a that has not been assigned a probability, where n is the number of conflict actions in state m with lookahead symbol a .

Step 8 Return the LR table T produced at the completion of Step 7 as the *Bigram LR table*.

As explained above, the removal of actions at Step 2 corresponds to the operation of incorporating connection constraints into an LR table. We call Step 3 Constraint Propagation which reduces the size of the LR table (Li, 1996). As many actions are removed from the LR table during Step 2 and 3, it becomes possible to compress the LR table in Step 4. We will demonstrate one of such example in the following section.

It should be noted that the above algorithm can be applied to any type of LR table, that is a canonical LR table, an LALR table, or an SLR table.

4 An Example

4.1 Generating a Bigram LR Table

In this section, we will provide a simple example of the generation of a bigram LR table by way of applying Algorithm 1 to both a CFG and a probabilistic connection matrix, to create a bigram LR table. Figure 4 and Figure 5 give a sample CFG G_1 and a probabilistic connection matrix M_1 , respectively.

Note that grammar G_1 in Figure 4 does not explicitly express local connection constraints between terminal symbols. Such local connection constraints are easily expressed by a matrix M_1 as shown in Figure 5.

From the CFG given in Figure 4, we can generate an LR table, Table 1, in Step 1 using the conventional LR table generation algorithm.

state	action					goto				
	a1	a2	b1	b2	\$	A	B	X	Y	S
0	sh1	sh2				3		4		5
1	re6	re6	re6	re6						
2	re7	re7	re7	re7	re7					
3	re2	re2	re2/sh6	sh7						
4	sh9	sh10	sh11			12	8		13	
5					acc					
6	re8	re8	re8							
7	re9	re9	re9							
8	re3	re3	re3							
9					re6					
10					re7					
11	sh9	sh10				14				
12					re4					
13					re1					
14					re5					

Table 1: Initial LR table for G_1

state	action					goto				
	a1	a2	b1	b2	\$	A	B	X	Y	S
0	sh1	sh2				3		4		5
1	re6(2)	re6(2)	re6(2)	re6						
2	re7(2)	re7(2)	re7	re7(2)						
3	re2(3)	re2	re2/sh6	sh7						
4	sh9(3)	sh10	sh11			12	8		13	
5					acc					
6	re8(2)	re8	re8							
7	re9(3)	re9(2)	re9							
8	re3(3)	re3	re3							
9					re6(2)					
10					re7					
11	sh9(3)	sh10				14				
12					re4					
13					re1					
14					re5					

Table 2: LR table after Step 2 and 3

Table 2 is the resultant LR table at the completion of Step 2 and Step 3, produced based on Table 1. Actions numbered (2) and (3) in Table 2 are those which are removed by Step 2 and Step 3, respectively.

In state 1 with a lookahead symbol $b1$, $re6$ is carried out after executing action $sh1$ in state 0, pushing $a1$ onto the stack. Note that $a1$ and $b1$ are now consecutive, in this order. However, the probabilistic connection matrix (see Figure 5) does not allow such a sequence of terminal symbols, since $PConnect(a1, b1) = 0$. Therefore, the action $re6$ in state 1 with lookahead $b1$ is removed from Table 1 in Step 2, and thus marked as (2) in Table 2. For this same reason, the other $re6$ s in state 1 with lookahead symbols $a1$ and $a2$ are also removed from Table 1.

On the other hand, in case of $re6$ in state 1 with lookahead symbol $b2$, as $a1$ can be followed by $b2$ ($PConnect(a1, b2) \neq 0$), action $re6$ cannot be removed. The reason remaining actions marked as (2) in Table 2 should be self-evident to the readers.

Next, we would like to consider the reason why action $sh9$ in state 4 with lookahead $a1$ is removed from Table 1. In state 9, $re6$ with lookahead symbol $\$$ has already been removed in Step 2, and there is no succeeding action for $sh9$. Therefore, action $sh9$ in state 3 is removed in Step 3, and hence marked as (3).

Let us consider action $re3$ in state 8 with lookahead $a1$. After this action is carried out, the GLR parser goes to state 4 after pushing X onto the stack. However, $sh9$ in state 4 with lookahead $a1$ has already been removed, and there is no succeeding action for $re3$. As a result, $re3$ in state 8 with lookahead symbol $a1$ is removed in Step 3. Similarly, $re9$ in state 7 with lookahead symbol $a1$ is also removed in Step 3. In this way, the removal of actions propagates to other removals. This chain of removals is called Constraint Propagation, and occurs in Step 3. Actions removed in Step 3 are marked as (3) in Table 2.

Careful readers will notice that there is now no action in state 9 and that it is possible to delete this state in Step 4. Table 3 shows the LR table after Step 4.

As a final step, we would like to assign bigram constraints to each action in Table 3. Let us consider the two $re8$ s in state 6, reached after executing $sh6$ in state 4 by pushing a lookahead of $b1$ onto the stack. In state 6, P is calculated at Step 5 as shown below:

$$\begin{aligned} P &= PConnect(b1, a2) + PConnect(b1, b1) \\ &= 0.1 + 0.9 \\ &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

We can assign the following probabilities p to each $re8$ in state 6 by way of Step 5:

$$p = \begin{cases} \frac{PConnect(b1, a2)}{P \times n} = \frac{0.1}{1 \times 1} = 0.1 & \text{for } re8 \text{ with lookahead } a2 \\ \frac{PConnect(b1, b1)}{P \times n} = \frac{0.9}{1 \times 1} = 0.9 & \text{for } re8 \text{ with lookahead } b1 \end{cases}$$

state	action					goto				
	a1	a2	b1	b2	\$	A	B	X	Y	S
0	sh1	sh2				3		4		5
1										
2			re7							
3		re2	re2/sh6	sh7			8			
4		sh10	sh11			12		13		
5					acc					
6		re8	re8							
7			re9							
8		re3	re3							
10				re7						
11		sh10				14				
12					re4					
13					re1					
14					re5					

Table 3: LR table after Step 4

After assigning a probability to each action in the LR table at Step 5, there remain actions without probabilities. For example, the two conflict actions ($re2/sh6$) in state 3 with lookahead $b1$ are not assigned a probability. Therefore, each of these actions is assigned the same probability, 0.5, in Step 7. A probability of 1 is assigned to remaining actions, since there is no conflict among them.

Table 4 shows the final results of applying Algorithm 1 to G_1 and M_1 .

4.2 Comparison of Language Models

Using the bigram LR table as shown in Table 4, the probability $P1$ of the string “ $a2\ b1\ a2$ ” is calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned}
 P1 &= P(a2\ b1\ a2) \\
 &= P(0, a2, sh2) \times P(2, b1, re7) \times P(3, b1, re2) \times P(4, b1, sh11) \\
 &\quad \times P(11, a2, sh10) \times P(10, \$, re7) \times P(14, \$, re5) \times P(13, \$, re1) \\
 &\quad \times P(5, \$, acc) \\
 &= 0.4 \times 1.0 \times 0.5 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 \\
 &= 0.2
 \end{aligned}$$

where $P(S, L, A)$ means the probability of an action A in state S with lookahead L .

On the other hand, using only bigram constraints, the probability $P2$ of the string “ $a2\ b1\ a2$ ” is calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned}
 P2 &= P(a2\ b1\ a2) \\
 &= P(a2|\#) \times P(b1|a2) \times P(a2|b1) \times P(\$|a2) \\
 &= \times 0.3 \times 0.1 \times 0.7
 \end{aligned}$$

state	action					goto				
	a1	a2	b1	b2	\$	A	B	X	Y	S
0	sh1 0.6	sh2 0.4				3		4		5
1				re6 1.0						
2			re7 1.0							
3		re2 1.0	re2/sh6 0.5/0.5	sh7 1.0			8			
4		sh10 1.0	sh11 1.0			12			13	
5					acc 1.0					
6		re8 0.1	re8 0.9							
7			re9 1.0							
8		re3 1.0	re3 1.0							
10					re7 1.0					
11		sh10 1.0				14				
12					re4 1.0					
13					re1 1.0					
14					re5 1.0					

Table 4: The Bigram LR table constructed by Algorithm 1

$$= 0.0084$$

The reason why $P1 > P2$ can be explained as follows. Consider the beginning symbol $a2$ of a sentence. In the case of the bigram model, $a2$ can only be followed by either of the two symbols $b1$ and $\$$ (see Figure 5). However, consulting the bigram LR table reveals that in state 0 with lookahead $a2$, $sh2$ is carried out, entering state 2. State 2 has only one action $re7$ with lookahead symbol $b1$. In other words, in state 2, $\$$ is not predicted as a succeeding symbol of $a1$. The exclusion of an ungrammatical prediction in $\$$ makes $P1$ larger than $P2$.

Perplexity is a measure of the complexity of a language model. The larger the probability of the language model is, the smaller the perplexity of the language model is. The above result ($P1 > P2$) indicates that the bigram LR table model gives smaller perplexity than the bigram model. In the next section, we will demonstrate this fact.

5 Evaluation of Perplexity

Perplexity is a measure of the constraint imposed by the language model. *Test-set perplexity* (Jelinek, 1990) is commonly used to measure the perplexity of a language model from a test-set. *Test-set perplexity* for a language model L is simply the geometric mean of probabilities defined by:

$$Q(L) = 2^{H(L)}$$

where

$$H(L) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^M \log P(S_i)$$

Here N is the number of terminal symbols in the test set, M is the number of test sentences and $P(S_i)$ is the probability of generating i -th test sentence S_i .

In the case of the bigram model, $P(S_i)$ is:

$$\begin{aligned} P(S_i) &= P(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) \\ &= P(x_1 | \#) P(x_2 | x_1) \cdots P(x_n | x_{n-1}) P(\$ | x_n) \end{aligned}$$

Table 5 shows the *test-set perplexity* of allophones for each language model. Here the allophone bigram models (i.e. probabilistic allophone connection matrix) were trained on a corpus with about 220,000 phrases, with the open test-set consisting of about 17,000 phrases. The CFG used is a phrase context-free grammar used in speech recognition tasks, and the number of rules and words is 2813 and 1588, respectively.

As is evident from Table 5, the use of a bigram LR table decreases the *test-set perplexity* from 8.50 to 5.06, not considering CFG constraints, and from 4.30 to 2.95, with CFG constraints. This result shows the effectiveness of using a bigram LR table.

Even though the experiment described above is concerned with speech recognition, our method is applicable to all kinds of natural language processing systems.

Language model	Perplexity
Connection matrix	8.50
Bigram	5.06
CFG + Connection matrix	4.30
CFG + Probabilistic connection matrix (Bigram LR table)	2.95

Table 5: Perplexity of language models

6 Conclusions

In this paper, we described a method to construct a bigram LR table, and then discussed the advantage of our method, comparing our method to the bigram language model. The principle advantage is that, in using a bigram LR table, we can combine both local probabilistic connection constraints (bigram constraints) and global constraints (CFG).

It is well known that the perplexity of a bigram language model is greater than that of a trigram language model. We have already shown that the perplexity of a bigram language model is greater than that of a language model using a bigram LR table. It is an interesting question as to which of a trigram language model and a bigram LR table language model has larger perplexity. With regard to data sparseness, a bigram LR table language model is better than a trigram language model, since bigram constraints are easier to acquire than trigram constraints. In order to compare the bigram LR table language model with the trigram language model, we need to carry out further experimentation.

Su et al. (Su et al., 1991) and Chiang et al. (Chiang et al., 1995) have proposed a very interesting corpus-based natural language processing method that takes account not only of lexical, syntactic, and semantic scores concurrently, but also context-sensitivity in the language model. However, their method seems to suffer from difficulty in acquiring probabilities from a given corpus.

Wright (Wright, 1990) developed a method of distributing the probability of each PCFG rule to each action in an LR table. However, this method only calculates syntactic scores of parsing trees based on a context-free framework.

Briscoe and Carroll (Briscoe and Carroll., 1993) attempt to incorporate probabilities into an LR table. They insist that the resultant probabilistic LR table can include probabilities with context-sensitivity. In a recent technical report, (Inui et al., 1997) reported out that the resultant probabilistic LR table has a defect in terms of the process used to normalize probabilities associated with each action in the LR table. Inui et. al. are now obtaining promising experimental results which will be published elsewhere.

Finally, we would like to mention that Klavans and Resnik (Klavans and Resnik, 1996) have advocated a similar approach to ours which combines symbolic and statistical constraints, CFG and bigram constraints.

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