

Introduction to Glue Semantics

Mark-Matthias Zymla¹ Jamie Y. Findlay²

¹University of Konstanz

²University of Oslo

ESSLLI 2025: 04–08 Aug 2025



**UNIVERSITY
OF OSLO**

Universität
Konstanz



Course overview

- 1 Basic theory
- 2 Applications
- 3 Crossover – setting up the computational tools
- 4 Computational algorithms
- 5 Constraining Glue

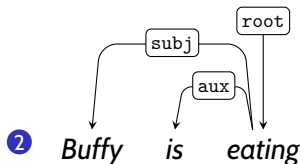
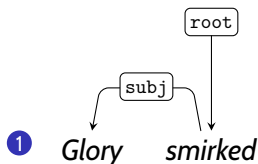
Goals

- 1 To familiarise you with the key concepts and tools of Glue Semantics.
- 2 To make you aware of the complexities that arise when we try to implement theory computationally.
- 3 To give you some hands-on experience of such computational implementation.
- 4 To make you think critically about certain default assumptions regarding the connection between syntax and semantics.

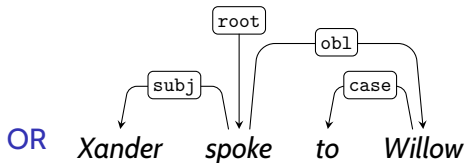
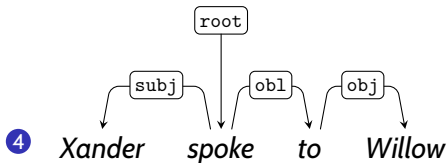
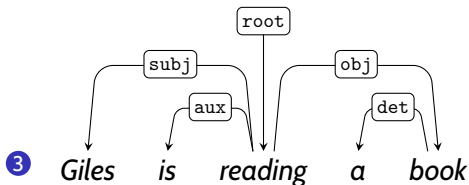
Exercise 1: Thinking with dependencies (1/3)

spaCy/displaCy

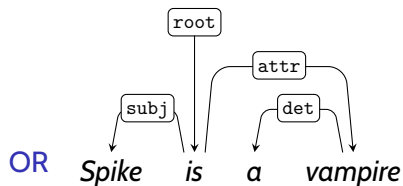
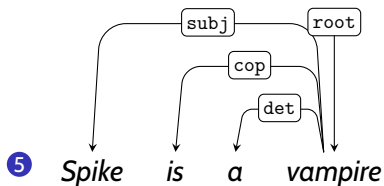
<https://demos.explosion.ai/displacy>



Exercise 1. Thinking with dependencies (2/3)



Exercise 1. Thinking with dependencies (3/3)



Exercise 2: Meaning constructors (1/2)

- 1
 - a $\text{hates} \rightsquigarrow \lambda y. \lambda x. \text{hates}(x, y) : E(\bullet \text{ obj}) \multimap [E(\bullet \text{ subj}) \multimap T(\bullet)]$
 - b $\text{sleeps} \rightsquigarrow \lambda x. \text{sleeps}(x) : E(\bullet \text{ subj}) \multimap T(\bullet)$
 - c $\text{Giles} \rightsquigarrow \text{giles} : E(\bullet)$
 - d $\text{book} \rightsquigarrow \lambda x. \text{book}(x) : E(\bullet) \multimap T(\bullet)$
 - e $\text{sister} \rightsquigarrow \lambda y. \lambda x. \text{sister}(x, y) : E(\bullet \text{ poss}) \multimap [E(\bullet) \multimap T(\bullet)]$
 - f $\text{everyone} \rightsquigarrow \lambda P. \forall x. \text{person}(x) \rightarrow P(x) : \forall \alpha. [E(\bullet) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)$

Exercise 2: Meaning constructors (2/2)

2

[hates]

$\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{hates}(x, y) : E(a) \multimap [E(s) \multimap T(h)]$

[Angel]

$\text{angel} : E(a)$

[Spike]

$\text{spike} : E(s)$

$\lambda x. \text{hates}(x, \text{angel}) : E(s) \multimap T(h)$

$\text{hates}(\text{spike}, \text{angel}) : T(h)$

Exercise 3: Practising with Glue proofs (1/3)

1

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{[laughed]} \\ \lambda x.\text{laughed}(x) : E(b) \multimap T(l) \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{[Buffy]} \\ \text{buffy} : E(b) \end{array}}{\text{laughed}(\text{buffy}) : T(l)} \multimap_{\mathcal{E}}$$

Exercise 3: Practising with Glue proofs (2/3)

2

[scolded]

$\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{scolded}(x, y) : E(b) \multimap [E(g) \multimap T(s)]$

[Buffy]

buffy : $E(b)$

[Giles]

giles : $E(g)$

$\lambda x. \text{scolded}(x, \text{buffy}) : E(g) \multimap T(s)$

scolded(giles, buffy) : $T(s)$

Exercise 3: Practising with Glue proofs (3/3)

2

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{[is]} \\ \lambda P. \lambda x. P(x) : \\ [E(v) \multimap T(v)] \multimap E(s) \multimap T(v) \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{[vampire]} \\ \text{vampire} : \\ E(v) \multimap T(v) \end{array}}{\begin{array}{l} \lambda x. \text{vampire}(x) : \\ E(s) \multimap T(v) \end{array}} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{[Spike]} \\ \text{spike} : \\ E(s) \end{array}$$

$$\text{vampire}(\text{spike}) : T(v)$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (1/10)

1 *every* \leadsto

$$\lambda P.\lambda Q.\forall x.P(x) \rightarrow Q(x)$$

$$[E(\hat{\bullet}) \multimap T(\hat{\bullet})] \multimap \forall \alpha.[E(\bullet) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)$$

– We need a way to refer to a node's mother (here we use ' $\hat{\bullet}$ ').

2

[every]

$$\lambda P.\lambda Q.\forall x.P(x) \rightarrow Q(x) :$$

$$[E(v) \multimap T(v)] \multimap \forall \alpha.[[E(v) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap \alpha]$$

[vampire]

$$\lambda x.\mathbf{vampire}(x) :$$

$$E(v) \multimap T(v)$$

$$\lambda Q.\forall x.\mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow P(x) :$$

$$\forall \alpha.[E(v) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)$$

$$\lambda Q.\forall x.\mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) :$$

$$[E(s) \multimap T(s)] \multimap T(s)$$

$\forall_{\mathcal{E}}$

[snarled]

$$\lambda x.\mathbf{snarled}(x) :$$

$$E(v) \multimap T(s)$$

$$\forall x.\mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{snarled}(x) : T(s)$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (2/10)

3 MEANING CONSTRUCTORS:

every $\rightsquigarrow \lambda P. \lambda Q. \forall x. P(x) \rightarrow Q(x) :$
 $[E(v) \multimap T(v)] \multimap \forall \alpha. [[E(v) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)]$

vampire $\rightsquigarrow \lambda x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) :$
 $E(v) \multimap T(v)$

killed $\rightsquigarrow \lambda y. \lambda x. \mathbf{killed}(x, y) :$
 $E(w) \multimap [E(v) \multimap T(k)]$

a $\rightsquigarrow \lambda P. \lambda Q. \exists x. P(x) \wedge Q(x) :$
 $[E(w) \multimap T(w)] \multimap \forall \beta. [[E(w) \multimap T(\beta)] \multimap T(\beta)]$

werewolf $\rightsquigarrow \lambda x. \mathbf{werewolf}(x) :$
 $E(w) \multimap T(w)$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (3/10)

③ **[every], [vampire]** $\vdash \lambda Q. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) :$
 $\forall \alpha. [E(v) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)$

[a], [werewolf] $\vdash \lambda Q. \exists x. \text{werewolf}(x) \wedge Q(x) :$
 $\forall \beta. [E(w) \multimap T(\beta)] \multimap T(\beta)$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (4/10)

3

[killed]

$$\frac{\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{killed}(x, y) : E(w) \multimap [E(v) \multimap T(k)]}{\left[\begin{array}{c} y : \\ E(w) \end{array} \right]^1}$$

[every vampire]

$$\lambda x. \text{killed}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap T(k)$$

$$\lambda Q. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) : [E(v) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)$$

$$\frac{\forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \text{killed}(x, y) : T(k)}{\multimap_{\mathcal{I}, 1}}$$

$$\frac{\lambda y. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \text{killed}(x, y) : E(w) \multimap T(k)}{\multimap_{\mathcal{I}, 1}}$$

[a werewolf]

$$\lambda Q. \exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge Q(y) : [E(w) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)$$

$$\exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \text{killed}(x, y) : T(k)$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (5/10)

3

[killed]

$$\frac{\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{killed}(x, y) : E(w) \multimap [E(v) \multimap T(k)] \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} y : \\ E(w) \end{array} \right]^1}{\lambda x. \text{killed}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap T(k) \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} x : \\ E(v) \end{array} \right]^2}$$

$\text{killed}(x, y) :$
 $T(k)$

$$\frac{}{\lambda y. \text{killed}(x, y) : E(w) \multimap T(k)} \multimap_{\mathcal{I},1}$$

[a werewolf]

$$\lambda Q. \exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge Q(y) : [E(w) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)$$

$\exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge \text{killed}(x, y) :$
 $T(k)$

$$\frac{}{\lambda x. \exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge \text{killed}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap T(k)} \multimap_{\mathcal{I},2}$$

[every vampire]

$$\lambda Q. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) : [E(v) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)$$

$$\forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \exists y. \text{werewolf}(y) \wedge \text{killed}(x, y) : T(k)$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (6/10)

4 MEANING CONSTRUCTORS:

Giles \rightsquigarrow **giles** :
 $E(gi)$

gave \rightsquigarrow $\lambda z. \lambda y. \lambda x. \mathbf{gave}(x, y, z) :$
 $E(e) \multimap [E(b) \multimap [E(gi) \multimap T(ga)]]$

everyone \rightsquigarrow $\lambda P. \forall x. \mathbf{person}(x) \rightarrow P(x) :$
 $[E(e) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga)$

a \rightsquigarrow $\lambda P. \lambda Q. \exists x. P(x) \wedge Q(x) :$
 $[E(b) \multimap T(b)] \multimap [[E(b) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga)]$

book \rightsquigarrow $\lambda x. \mathbf{book}(x) :$
 $E(b) \multimap T(b)$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (7/10)

4 Common part:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{[gave]} \\
 \lambda z. \lambda y. \lambda x. \text{gave}(x, y, z) : \\
 E(e) \multimap [E(b) \multimap [E(gi) \multimap T(ga)]] \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} z : \\ E(e) \end{array} \right]^1 \\
 \hline
 \lambda y. \lambda x. \text{gave}(x, y, z) : \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} y : \\ E(b) \end{array} \right]^2 \\
 E(b) \multimap [E(gi) \multimap T(ga)] \\
 \hline
 \lambda x. \text{gave}(x, y, z) : \quad \text{[Giles]} \\
 E(gi) \multimap T(ga) \quad \text{giles :} \\
 \hline
 \text{gave(giles, y, z) :} \\
 T(ga) \\
 \vdots
 \end{array}$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (8/10)

- ④ Surface scope (*everyone* \gg *a book*), continuing from above:

⋮

gave(giles, y, z) :

$T(ga)$

$\multimap_{\mathcal{I},2}$

[a book]

$\lambda y.\mathbf{gave(giles, y, z) :$

$E(b) \multimap T(ga)$

$\lambda Q.\exists y.\mathbf{book(y) \wedge Q(y) :$

$[E(b) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga)$

$\exists y.\mathbf{book(y) \wedge gave(giles, y, z) :$

$T(ga)$

$\multimap_{\mathcal{I},1}$

$\lambda z.\exists y.\mathbf{book(y) \wedge gave(giles, y, z) :$

$E(e) \multimap T(ga)$

[everyone]

$\lambda P.\forall z.\mathbf{person(z) \rightarrow P(z) :$

$[E(e) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga)$

$\forall z.\mathbf{person(z) \rightarrow \exists y.book(y) \wedge gave(giles, y, z) :$

$T(ga)$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (9/10)

- ④ Inverse scope (*a book* \gg *everyone*), continuing from above:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \vdots \\
 \vdots \\
 \text{gave}(\text{giles}, y, z) : \\
 T(ga) \\
 \hline
 \lambda z. \text{gave}(\text{giles}, y, z) : \quad \text{[everyone]} \\
 E(e) \multimap T(ga) \quad \lambda P. \forall z. \text{person}(z) \rightarrow P(z) : \\
 \quad \quad \quad [E(e) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga) \\
 \hline
 \forall z. \text{person}(z) \rightarrow \text{gave}(\text{giles}, y, z) : \\
 T(ga) \\
 \hline
 \lambda y. \forall z. \text{person}(z) \rightarrow \text{gave}(\text{giles}, y, z) : \quad \text{[a book]} \\
 E(b) \multimap T(ga) \quad \lambda Q. \exists y. \text{book}(y) \wedge Q(y) : \\
 \quad \quad \quad [E(b) \multimap T(ga)] \multimap T(ga) \\
 \hline
 \exists y. \text{book}(y) \wedge \forall z. \text{person}(z) \rightarrow \text{gave}(\text{giles}, y, z) : \\
 T(ga)
 \end{array}$$

Exercise 4: Quantificational determiners (10/10)

We get two proofs – as ever, when there are two scope-taking elements, both orders are attested.

This, it seems, is not empirically correct, since the double object construction in English is a scope-freezing construction: only the surface scope reading is licit.

The problem of constraining scope in Glue has received some recent attention. See [Findlay & Haug \(2022\)](#) and [Zymla \(2024\)](#) for references, discussion, and a suggested solution (albeit originally couched in terms of LFG syntax). We will also talk about this from a computational perspective later in the week.

Exercise 5: Latin

- 1 *amat* \leadsto $\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{loves}(x, y) : E(a) \multimap [E(d) \multimap T(am)]$
 Angelum \leadsto **angel** : $E(a)$
 Drusilla \leadsto **drusilla** : $E(d)$

- 2
- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| [amat] | [Angelum] | |
| $\lambda y. \lambda x. \text{loves}(x, y) : E(a) \multimap [E(d) \multimap T(am)]$ | angel : $E(a)$ | |
| <hr/> | | [Drusilla] |
| $\lambda x. \text{loves}(x, \text{angel}) : E(d) \multimap T(am)$ | | drusilla : $E(d)$ |
| <hr/> | | |
| $\text{loves}(\text{drusilla}, \text{angel}) : T(am)$ | | |

Exercise 6: Reordering arguments

[loves]

$$\frac{\lambda x. \lambda y. \text{loves}(x, y) : E(s) \multimap [E(e) \multimap T(l)]}{\lambda y. \text{loves}(x, y) : E(e) \multimap T(l)} \left[\begin{array}{c} x : \\ E(s) \end{array} \right]^1$$

[everyone]

$$\frac{\lambda P. \forall y. \text{person}(y) \rightarrow P(y) : [E(e) \multimap T(l)] \multimap T(l)}{\forall y. \text{person}(y) \rightarrow \text{loves}(x, y) : T(l)} \multimap \mathcal{I}, 1$$

[someone]

$$\frac{\lambda P. \exists x. \text{person}(x) \wedge P(x) : [E(s) \multimap T(l)] \multimap T(l)}{\exists x. \text{person}(x) \wedge \forall y. \text{person}(y) \rightarrow \text{loves}(x, y) : T(l)}$$

Exercise 7: Further practice (1/5)

1

[Snyder] **[frightens]**

snyder : $\lambda x. \lambda y. \text{frightens}(x, y) :$
 $E(s) \quad E(sn) \multimap [E(st) \multimap T(f)]$

[every]

$\lambda P. \lambda Q. \forall y. P(y) \rightarrow Q(y) :$
 $[E(st) \multimap T(st)] \multimap [[E(st) \multimap T(f)] \multimap T(f)]$

[student]

$\lambda x. \text{student}(x) :$
 $E(st) \multimap T(st)$

$\lambda y. \text{frightens}(x, y) :$
 $E(st) \multimap T(f)$

$\lambda Q. \forall y. \text{student}(y) \rightarrow Q(y) :$
 $[E(st) \multimap T(f)] \multimap T(f)$

$\forall y. \text{student}(y) \rightarrow \text{frightens}(\text{snyder}, y) : T(f)$

Exercise 7: Further practice (2/5)

② **[every], [vampire]** $\vdash \lambda Q. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) :$
 $\forall \alpha. [E(v) \multimap T(\alpha)] \multimap T(\alpha)$

[a], [teenager] $\vdash \lambda Q. \exists x. \text{teenager}(x) \wedge Q(x) :$
 $\forall \beta. [E(t) \multimap T(\beta)] \multimap T(\beta)$

Exercise 7: Further practice (3/5)

2 Surface scope:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{[bit]} \\
 \frac{\lambda x. \lambda y. \text{bit}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap [E(t) \multimap T(k)] \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} x : \\ E(v) \end{array} \right]^1}{\lambda y. \text{bit}(x, y) : E(t) \multimap T(k)} \quad \text{[a teenager]} \\
 \frac{\lambda Q. \exists y. \text{teenager}(y) \wedge Q(y) : [E(t) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)}{\exists y. \text{teenager}(y) \wedge \text{bit}(x, y) : T(k)} \\
 \frac{\lambda x. \exists y. \text{teenager}(y) \wedge \text{bit}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap T(k)}{\lambda Q. \forall x. \text{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) : [E(v) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)} \multimap_{\mathcal{I},1} \quad \text{[every vampire]} \\
 \hline
 \forall x. \text{vampire}(\rightarrow) \exists y. \text{teenager}(y) \wedge \text{bit}(x, y) : T(k)
 \end{array}$$

Exercise 7: Further practice (4/5)

② Inverse scope:

[bit]

$$\frac{\lambda y. \lambda x. \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : E(t) \multimap [E(v) \multimap T(k)]}{\lambda x. \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : E(v) \multimap T(k)} \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} y : \\ E(t) \end{array} \right]^1$$

[every vampire]

$$\frac{\lambda Q. \forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow Q(x) : [E(v) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)}{\forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : T(k)}$$

$$\frac{\forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : T(k)}{\lambda y. \forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : E(t) \multimap T(k)} \multimap_{\mathcal{I},1}$$

[a teenager]

$$\frac{\lambda Q. \exists y. \mathbf{teenager}(y) \wedge Q(y) : [E(t) \multimap T(k)] \multimap T(k)}{\exists y. \mathbf{teenager}(y) \wedge \forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : T(k)}$$

$$\exists y. \mathbf{teenager}(y) \wedge \forall x. \mathbf{vampire}(x) \rightarrow \mathbf{bit}(x, y) : T(k)$$

Exercise 7: Further practice (5/5)

3

	[Buffy] [loves]	[some]	[vampire]
	$\text{buffy} : \lambda x. \lambda y. \text{loves}(x, y) :$ $E(b) \quad E(b) \multimap [E(v) \multimap T(l)]$	$\lambda P. \lambda Q. \exists x. P(x) \wedge Q(x) :$ $[E(v) \multimap T(v)] \multimap [[E(v) \multimap T(l)] \multimap T(l)]$	$\lambda x. \text{vampire}(x) :$ $E(v) \multimap T(v)$
[Xander] [thinks] $\text{xander} : \lambda x. \lambda p. \text{thinks}(x, p) :$ $E(xa) \quad E(xa) \multimap [T(l) \multimap T(t)]$	$\lambda y. \text{loves}(\text{buffy}, y) :$ $E(v) \multimap T(l)$	$\lambda Q. \exists x. \text{vampire}(x) \wedge Q(x) :$ $[E(v) \multimap T(l)] \multimap T(l)$	
$\lambda p. \text{thinks}(\text{xander}, p) :$ $T(l) \multimap T(t)$	$\exists x. \text{vampire}(x) \wedge \text{loves}(\text{buffy}, x) :$ $T(l)$		
$\text{thinks}(\text{xander}, \exists x. \text{vampire}(x) \wedge \text{loves}(\text{buffy}, x))$			