

# Query expansion using Language Models

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## Abstract

The use of different methods of language modeling, within the field of information retrieval, is finding a wide diffusion in the state of the art. Based on the accuracy of the language model, the problem related to the information retrieval, in a large corpus of documents, can be solved. In order to do this, the basic idea of these approaches is to estimate a probabilistic linguistic model, for each document in the collection, which is able to generate a ranking of relevant documents given a query. One of the problems that afflicts this family of methods is due to the lack of data present. From this, it is necessary to apply smoothing techniques capable of adjusting the maximum likelihood estimator in order to correct the generated imprecision. This paper shows how their application outperforms the performance of classic methods, such as *tf-idf*, useful for generating rankings of documents ordered by relevance. Using them, we will look at some concepts that are useful for query expansion.

# INTRODUCTION

Over the years, query expansion techniques have been proposed as a solution to the problem of term mismatches between a query and its relevant documents. There are typically two types of query expansion method families: Local (based on Pseudo / Relevance / Indirect Feedback) and Global (based on the generation and use of a thesaurus) [5]. This paper focuses on the first category. Given the difficulty in gathering the users' feedback, only the first documents recovered will be considered relevant. Pseudo-relevant documents are used to find possible candidate terms to help expand the query [3]. This method has been further developed within the concept of the Language Model [4]. Statistical language models are widely used within Information Retrieval as they have a solid theoretical background and good empirical performance. At the state of the art, two well known probabilistic approaches in information retrieval are the Robertson and Sparck Jones model [6] and the Croft and Harper model [8]. Both models estimate the probability of relevance of each document to the query. Clearly, the two main problems relate to correctly estimating both the query model and the document model. A Language Model calculates the relevance of a document  $d$  to a query  $q$  by estimating a factored form of the distribution  $P(q, D)$  [2]. The construction of a good Language model must necessarily make use of smoothing models when one or more terms do not appear in a document. In the latter case, the maximum likelihood estimator would produce a probability equal to zero, invalidating the creation of the model itself [1] [7]. Another concept, useful for expanding the query and widely used within the project, is that of *Word Embeddings*. The latter is obtained precisely from the use of Language models, or rather thanks to the co-occurrence of the terms made available. This method is based on being able to map every single word into a vector of real numbers, within a vector space. The idea is to be able to compare the distance of these in order to understand their similarity relationship. If one word is similar to another, then these will be considered as synonyms. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section, *Research question and Methodology*, the objectives of the project will be introduced followed by an overview of the proposed approach. The third section, *Experimental result*, describes the whole system and the results obtained. Finally, the conclusions are presented in section four, *Concluding remarks*.

## 0.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualcosa [?].

## References

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