

Syntax-based Concept Alignment for Machine Translation

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Arianna Masciolini

A first definition

Concept Alignment: the task of finding semantical correspondences between parts of multilingual parallel texts.

Alice thought she might as well wait, as she had nothing else to do, and perhaps after all it might tell her something worth hearing.

For some minutes it puffed away without speaking, but at last it unfolded its arms, took the hookah out of its mouth again, and said, 'So you think you're changed, do you?'

'I'm afraid I am, sir,' said Alice; 'I can't remember things as I used--and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!'

Alice pensò che poteva aspettare, perchè non aveva niente di meglio da fare, e perchè forse il Bruco avrebbe potuto dirle qualche cosa d'importante.

Per qualche istante il Bruco fumò in silenzio, finalmente sciolse le braccia, si tolse la pipa di bocca e disse: — E così, tu credi di essere cambiata?

— Ho paura di sì, signore, — rispose Alice. — Non posso ricordarmi le cose bene come una volta, e non rimango della stessa statura neppure per lo spazio di dieci minuti!

From Lewis Carroll, *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*. Parallel text at paralleltext.io

CA at different levels of abstraction

Word alignment:

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nothing else to do, and perhaps after all it might tell
her something worth hearing.

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Phrase alignment:

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Subtasks

- ❖ **Concept Extraction:** identifying new concepts via linguistic comparison
- ❖ **Concept Propagation:** finding expressions corresponding to known concepts in a particular language

CA in translation

A human translator

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... same idea behind *compositional* Machine Translation.

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The meaning of a complex expression is determined by:

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The *translation* of a complex expression is given by:

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- ❑ the way its components are combined with each other (syntax, taking cross-lingual divergences into account)

Statistical approaches

Standard approaches to automation are statistical (IBM models)

Issues:

Statistical approaches

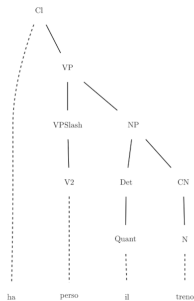
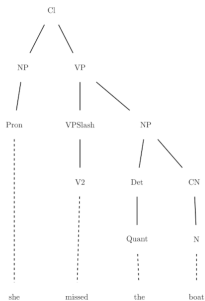
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Issues:

- ❑ “fixed” level of abstraction (generally either word or phrase alignment)
- ❑ correspondences are between strings
- ❑ need large amounts of raw data

Syntax-based approaches

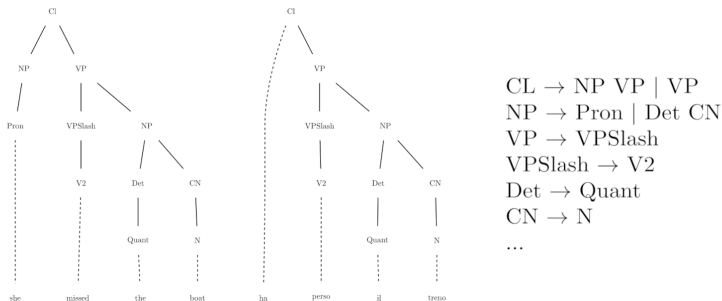
Alternative: tree-to-tree alignment



$CL \rightarrow NP \ VP \mid VP$
 $NP \rightarrow Pron \mid Det \ CN$
 $VP \rightarrow VPSlash$
 $VPSlash \rightarrow V2$
 $Det \rightarrow Quant$
 $CN \rightarrow N$
...

Syntax-based approaches

Alternative: tree-to-tree alignment



- ❑ ~~"fixed"~~ level of abstraction work at all levels of abstraction
- ❑ correspondences are between strings grammatical objects
- ❑ ~~need large amounts of raw data~~ work consistently well even on single *analyzed* sentence pairs

Syntax-based approaches: issues

1. grammars often defined independently, so not compatible each other
2. lack of robust parsers, while the quality of the analyses is crucial

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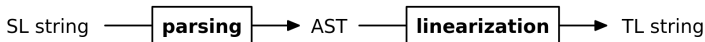
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- ❖ formalism/programming language to write **multilingual grammars** → solves problem 1
 - ❖ one abstract syntax
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- ❖ compilation-like approach to translation → good, grammaticality-preserving target language generation



- ❖ but: problem 2 persist

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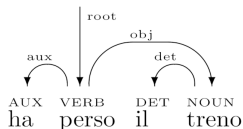
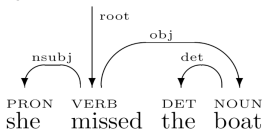
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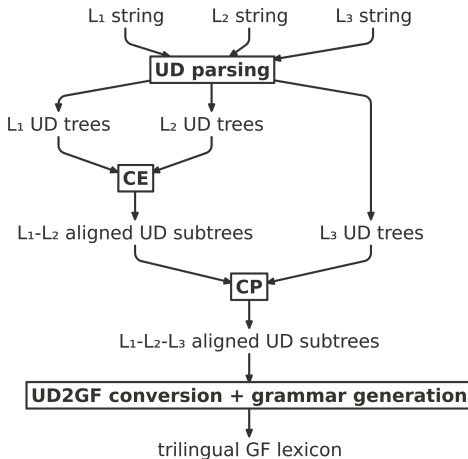
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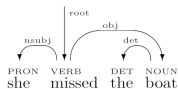
- ❖ easier target for a parser (e.g. UDPipe) → solves problem 2
- ❖ but: cannot be used for target language generation

Solution: UD + GF



Concept Extraction

Representations of UD trees



text = she missed the boat

1 she she PRON _ _ 2 nsubj _ _

2 missed miss VERB _ _ 0 root _ _

3 the the DET _ _ 4 det _ _

4 boat boat NOUN _ _ 2 obj _

2 missed miss VERB _ _ 0 root _ _

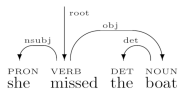
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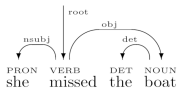
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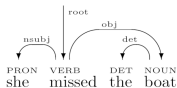
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- ❖ internally to the CA module, they are represented as rose trees

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type UDTree = RTree UDWord
type Alignment = (UDTree,UDTree)
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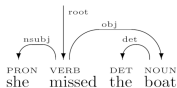
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- ❖ alignments are pairs of ud trees

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    3 the the DET _ _ 4 det _ _
```

```
2 perso perdere VERB _ _ 0 root _ _  
  1 ha avere AUX _ _ 2 aux _ _  
  4 treno treno NOUN _ _ 2 obj _ _  
    3 il il DET _ _ 4 det _ _
```

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 - ❖ heads: $\langle missed, perso \rangle$, $\langle boat, treno \rangle$

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 - ❖ counting

Divergences

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✚ categorial

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❖ thematic

- ❖ ***Yana** likes **books** VS **A Yana** piacciono **i libri***

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 - ⟨*many decisions were taken by Tommaso, många viktiga beslut togs av Tommaso*⟩ → ⟨*were taken, togs*⟩
 - ⟨*Giorgio took a course on machine learning techniques, Giorgio deltog i en kurs om maskininlärningstekniker*⟩ → ⟨*machine learning techniques, maskininlärningstekniker*⟩

Evaluation on PUD treebanks

Against the baseline

	baseline		improved version	
	en-it	en-sv	en-it	en-sv
distinct	1097	1257	1198	1314
correct	830 (58.12%)	995 (79.15%)	964 (80.46%)	1105 (84.03%)
useful	776 (54.34%)	976 (77.64%)	896 (74.79%)	1082 (82.28%)

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Against fast_align (en-it)

	improved version	fast_align (100)	fast_align (1000)
distinct	716	1440	1435
correct	536 (74.86%)	410 (28.47%)	656 (45.71%)
useful	491 (68.57%)	371 (25.76%)	590 (41.11%)

Evaluation on “raw” data

Data: sentence-aligned Computer Science course plans

❖ CSE (GU/Chalmers)

	DMI (en-it, 798 sentences)	CSE (en-sv, 498 sentences)
distinct	352	529
correct	243 (69.03%)	368 (69.56%)
useful	229 (65.05%)	351 (66.35%)

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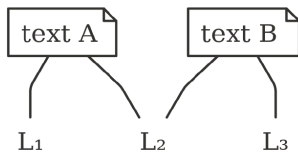
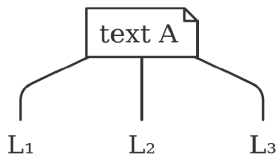
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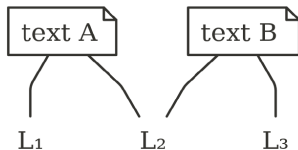
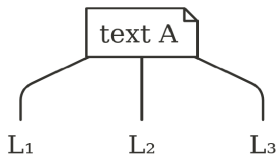
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Concept Propagation

Two scenarios



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1. 3+ lingual parallel text
2. 2 bilingual parallel texts with one language in common

General algorithm

For each L_1 - L_2 alignment:

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For each L_1 - L_2 alignment:

1. look for its L_2 member among all subtrees of the L_2 version of the text where it is to be propagated
2. if it is present, align the sentence it belongs to with its TL counterpart with the same procedure used for CE
3. if multiple candidate alignments are found, select the one with the closest depths

Caveats

- ❏ in step 1, irrelevant details of UD trees are to be ignored

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 - ❖ only consider word form, lemma, POS tag and dependency relation
- ❖ head alignments require special treatment as they are not composed of subtrees

Evaluation: scenario 1

	en-sv	it-sv
propagated	1019 (85.05%)	979 (84.64%)
tot. errors	133 (13.05%)	187 (19.1%)
CP-introduced	75 (56.39%)	84 (44.91%)

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- ❑ PUD treebanks
- ❑ the vast majority of concepts is propagated

Evaluation: scenario 2

Texts in different domains (subsets of PUD treebanks)

	en-it-sv	it-en-sv	en-sv-it	sv-en-it	it-sv-en	sv-it-en
extracted	638	638	687	687	608	608
propagated	92 (14.42%)	92 (14.42%)	98 (14.26%)	84 (12.22%)	101 (16.61%)	87 (14.37%)
tot. errors	46 (50%)	21 (22.82%)	42 (42.85%)	24 (28.57%)	21 (20.79%)	28 (32.18%)
CP-introduced	33 (71.73%)	11 (52.38%)	21 (50%)	12 (50%)	12 (57.14%)	21 (75%)

❑ mostly function words and very common content words

Evaluation: scenario 2

Texts in the same domain (course plans corpora)

	sv-en-it	it-en-sv
extracted	1950	1823
propagated	205 (10.51%)	200 (10.97%)
tot. errors	66 (32.19%)	61 (30.5%)
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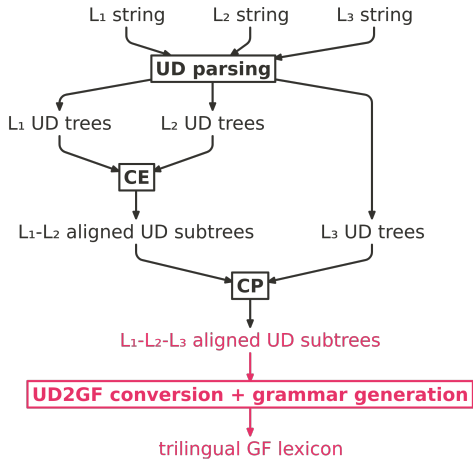
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 - ❖ an interesting error: $\langle \text{learning, inläarning, conoscere} \rangle$

MT experiments

What's left



From UD to GF alignments

- ❖ UD alignment postprocessing:

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 - ❖ *this sentence of the text is simple*

Extending the grammar

Easy to add RGL categories and functions to allow more variation:

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- ❑ *this sentence is simpler than that sentence*

Combining variations:

- ❑ *won't these short sentences be simpler than that long sentence?*

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 - ❖ avoid low scores due to different but equally valid lexical choices

Evaluation: results

	DMI (en-it)	CSE (en-sv)
BLEU-1 to 4	55.4	61.27
BLEU-1 to 3	62.75	67.77
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- ❖ most errors are semantical, but 10% of the translation to Italian and 6% of those to Swedish only contain grammatical errors

Conclusions and future work

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 - ❖ in a simple rule-based MT system

Future work

- ❑ integration with statistical alignment techniques
- ❑ verb phrases alignment
- ❑ iterative CA
- ❑ optimization of CP for multilingual corpora (scenario 1)
- ❑ generalization of CE to n languages
- ❑ stricter and language pair-specific criteria
- ❑ better alignment selection