Spelling Correction and the Noisy Channel

Real-Word Spelling Correction

Real-word spelling errors

- …leaving in about fifteen ***minuets*** to go to her house.
- The design ***an*** construction of the system…
- Can they ***lave*** him my messages?
- The study was conducted mainly ***be*** John Black.

- 25-40% of spelling errors are real words Kukich 1992

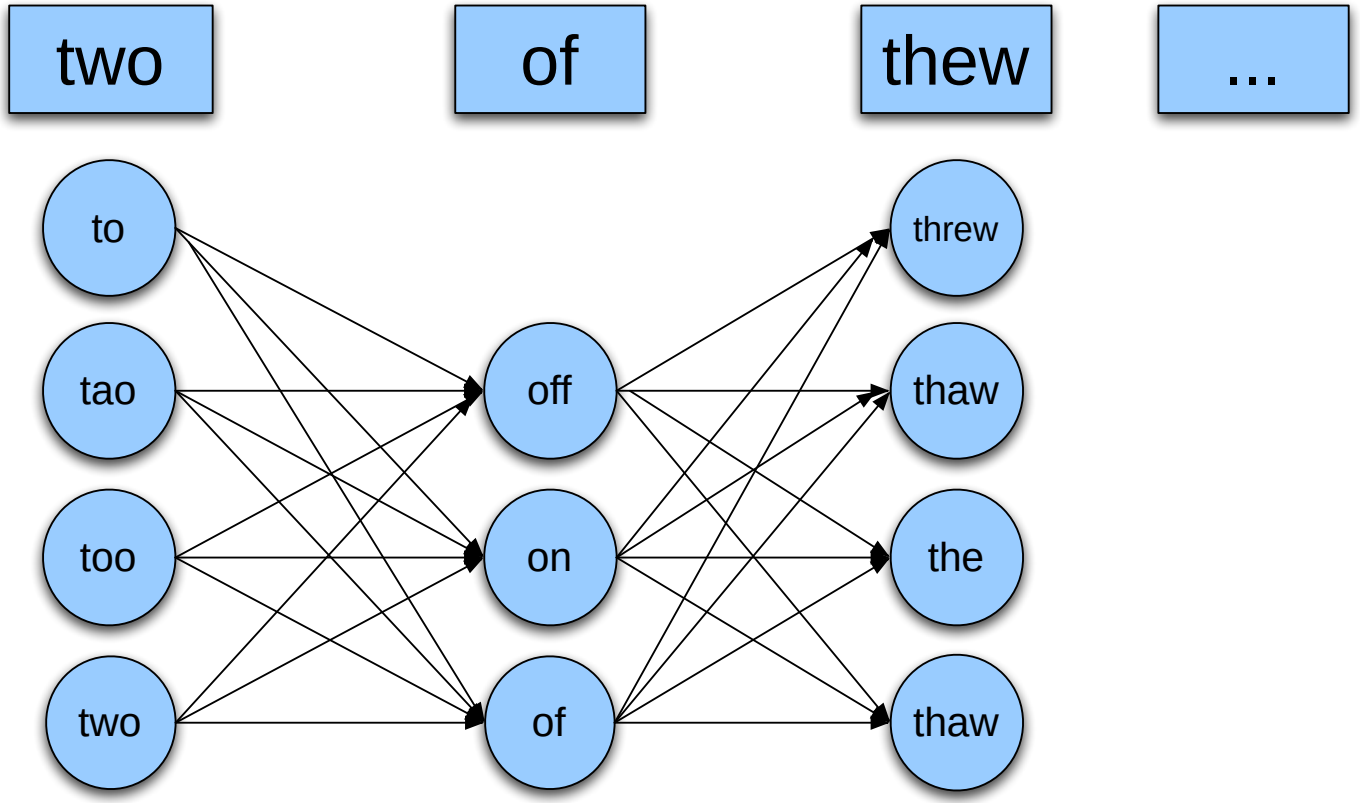
Solving real-world spelling errors

- For each word in sentence
  - Generate *candidate set*
    - the word itself
    - all single-letter edits that are English words
    - words that are homophones
- Choose best candidates
    - Noisy channel model
    - Task-specific classifier

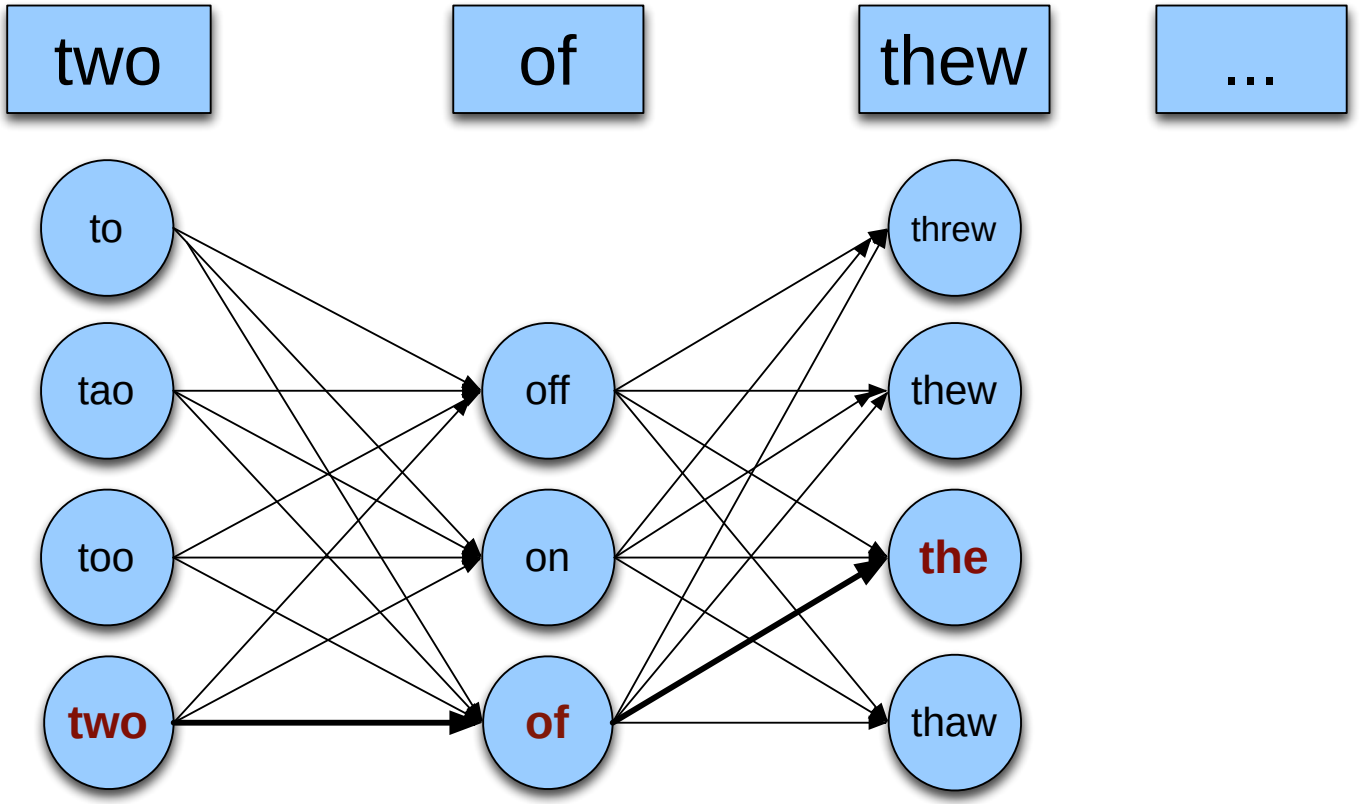
Noisy channel for real-word spell correction

- Given a sentence $w_1, w_2, w_3, \ldots, w_n$
- Generate a set of candidates for each word w_i
  - Candidate(w_1) = {w_1, w'_1 , w''_1 , w'''_1 ,…}
  - Candidate(w_2) = {w_2, w'_2 , w''_2 , w'''_2 ,…}
  - Candidate(w_n) = {w_n, w'_n , w''_n , w'''_n ,…}
- Choose the sequence W that maximizes P(W)

Noisy channel for real-word spell correction



Noisy channel for real-word spell correction



Simplification: One error per sentence

- Out of all possible sentences with one word replaced
  - w_1, **w''$_2$**,w_3,w_4 two **off** thew
  - w_1,w_2,**w'$_3$**,w_4 two of **the**
  - **w'''$_1$**,w_2,w_3,w_4 **too** of thew
  - …
- Choose the sequence W that maximizes P(W)

Where to get the probabilities

- Language model
  - Unigram
  - Bigram
  - Etc
- Channel model
  - Same as for non-word spelling correction
  - Plus need probability for no error, P(w|w)

Probability of no error

- What is the channel probability for a correctly typed word?
- P("the"|"the")

- Obviously this depends on the application
  - .90 (1 error in 10 words)
  - .95 (1 error in 20 words)
  - .99 (1 error in 100 words)
  - .995 (1 error in 200 words)

Peter Norvig's "thew" example

x	w	x|w	P(x|w)	P(w)	10^9 P(x|w)P(w)
thew	the	ew|e	0.000007	0.02	144
thew	thew		0.95	0.00000009	90
thew	thaw	e|a	0.001	0.0000007	0.7
thew	threw	h|hr	0.000008	0.000004	0.03
thew	thwe	ew|we	0.000003	0.00000004	0.0001

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