

# Semantic Analysis of Image-Based Learner Sentences

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# Background & Motivation

- ▶ Most intelligent computer-assisted language learning (ICALL) applications (*Rosetta Stone*, *Duo Lingo*, etc.) rely on outdated, ineffective methods:
  - ▶ rote memorization & grammatical error detection; menu-based vs. free input;
  - ▶ “*engineering first*”: not informed by second language acquisition (SLA), pedagogy, psychometrics
- ▶ SLA research → communicative & task based learning

*How can we bridge this gap between ICALL and SLA researchers?*

- ▶ My vision: open source app; transparent; pipeline of existing tools;
- ▶ teachers create new games/stories by adding visual prompts and crowdsourcing native speaker (NS) responses;
- ▶ trains NS model to evaluate non-native speaker (NNS) responses


# Research Questions

- RQ1. Are the responses of L2 English learners sufficiently similar to those of NSs to allow automatic evaluation based on a collection of NS responses? In other words, do learners demonstrate significant overlap with native-like usage in a picture description task (PDT) setting?
- RQ2. In the constrained communicative environment of a PDT, what are appropriate response and model representations for the purpose of providing meaning-oriented feedback or evaluation? In other words, which linguistic components are crucial and which are superfluous?
- RQ3. What kinds of existing NLP tools and language resources can be integrated to form a content analysis system for open response language learning tasks?

# Research Questions

- RQ4. How do “bag-of-words” and “bag-of-dependencies” approaches compare in terms of performance? Is a bag-of-words approach alone adequate for our needs?
- RQ5. Can the accuracy of the system be improved by the inclusion of semantic information from tools like semantic role labelers, WordNet, or word and sentence embeddings?
- RQ6. What is the annotation scheme for this task and can the system perform within the range of human performance? Relatedly, what does it mean for a response to be *appropriate* and how can this be captured with annotation?

## Pilot study: Data

	Response (L1)
	He is droning his wife pitcher. (Ar)
	The artist is drawing a pretty women. (Ch)
	The artist is painting a portrait of a lady. (En)
	The painter is painting a woman's paint. (Sp)

**Figure:** Example item from the pilot study showing responses from native speakers of Arabic (Ar), Chinese (Ch), English (En) and Spanish (Sp).

- ▶ 10 (transitive) PDT items  $\times$  53 participants = 530 responses;
  - ▶ 14 NSs (IU grad students), 39 NNSs (IEP students);
- ▶ Annotation: *Given the prompt, would the response be acceptable to most English speakers? Acceptable/unacceptable*
  - ▶ 1 annotator (me)

# Pilot study: Processing

First approach: **Rule-based** triple extraction and matching

Dependency parser  $\rightarrow$  lemmatizer  $\rightarrow V(S,O)$  extraction rules;

Compare NNS  $V(S,O)$  & NS  $V(S,O)$  list  $\rightarrow$  covered / not covered;

- ▶ Dependency-based
  - ▶ Captures aspects of form and meaning;
  - ▶ Subjects, objects, verbs clearly labeled;
- ▶  $V(S,O)$  extraction
  - ▶ Decision tree based on dependency indexing & labels, POS;
  - ▶ Custom for my transitive PDT, not generalizable, not robust;
  - ▶  $\approx 92\%$  accurate,  $\approx 8\%$  extraction errors;
- ▶ Overall accuracy: 58.9%
  - ▶ I.e., *Acceptable* covered, *unacceptable* not covered;

## Pilot study: Processing

Second approach: **Semantic similarity** scoring

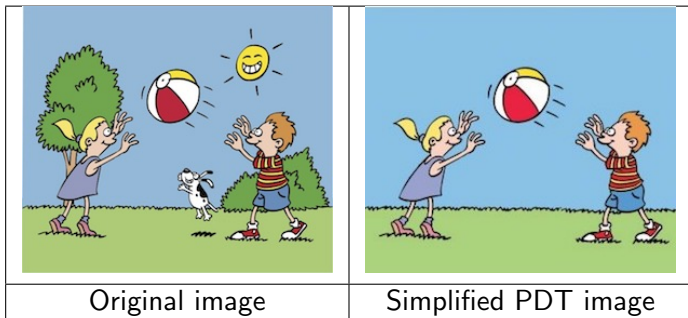
Dependency parser → lemmatizer → term frequency-inverse document frequency (tf-idf; “term” = lemmatized dependency);

NNS response score = cosine distance of NS and NNS tf-idf scores;

- ▶ tf-idf: Score dependencies according to importance;
- ▶ Vectorize & Score
  - ▶ Get *sorted union set* of NS and NNS dependencies;
  - ▶ NNS vector: Replace deps with their **NNS** tf-idf scores;
  - ▶ NS vector: Replace deps with their **NS** tf-idf scores;
  - ▶ Response score = *cosine distance* for NNS & NS vectors;
- ▶ Rank by scores & calculate Mean Average Precision (MAP);
  - ▶ MAP *acceptable* responses:  $\approx 51\%$
- ▶ Process is more robust & generalizable;
- ▶ Dataset (especially NS models) and annotation are weak;

# Main study: Data collection

PDT with very simple images only:





Intended to focus participants' attention on the main action



# Main study: Data collection


Two PDT prompt versions:

Targeted	Untargeted
	
<i>What is <b>the</b> baby doing?</i>	<i>What is happening?</i>

Intended for exploring the specificity needed for my approach

# Main study: Data collection




The pilot study *rake* problem:

	NNS Responses
	The gardener is <i>cleaning</i> the street.
	a man <i>removing</i> the tree leafs.
	The man is <i>sweeping</i> the floor.
	A man is <i>gathering</i> lots of leafs.

- ▶ 100% of NS used the verb *rake*;
  - ▶ NNS responses without *rake* are penalized;
- ▶ I address this by instructing NS to provide two non-identical responses;

# Main study: Data collection

3 verb types:

10 <b>intransitive</b> items	10 <b>transitive</b> items	10 <b>ditransitive</b> items
		
What is the girl doing?	What is the boy doing?	What is the girl doing?

Intended for exploring whether my approach can generalize to a broader range of sentence types

# Main study: Data collection

499 participants, 13,533 responses:

- ▶ 141 NNSs (English Language Improvement Program at IU);
  - ▶ 125 Mandarin, 4 Korean, 3 Burmese, 2 Hindi; 1 each: Arabic, Indonesian, German, Gujarati, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese;
- ▶ 358 NSs:
  - ▶ 329 crowdsourced, purchased via SurveyMonkey;
  - ▶ 29 familiar, unpaid colleagues;

	Response Counts		
Group	First	Second	Total
NNS	4290	0	4290
NS (all)	4634	4609	9243
Familiar	642	641	1283
Crowdsrc	3992	3968	7960
Total	8924	4609	<b>13,533</b>

# Annotation features


First iteration: **accuracy (A)** & **native-likeness (NL)**

- ▶ **2:** +A, +NL > **1:** +A, -NL > **0:** -A, -NL
- ▶ Not operationalizable: e.g., response is accurate w.r.t. prompt but adds unverifiable details; is this still *accurate*?
- ▶ Not *reliable*, not *valid*;

Several iterations later, 5 binary features:

- ▶ **Core event:** captures main action
- ▶ **Answerhood:** directly answers prompt
- ▶ **Grammaticality:** no grammar problems
- ▶ **Interpretability:** evokes clear mental image
- ▶ **Verifiability:** info is supported by image

# Annotation features

					
<i>What is the boy doing?</i>	C	A	G	I	V
He is eating food.	0	1	1	1	1
he eating pizza.	1	1	0	1	1
The boy is smiling pizza.	0	1	0	0	0
He may get fat eating.	0	0	1	1	0

**Table:** Annotated for five features: Core event (C), Answerhood (A), Grammaticality (G), Interpretability (I) and Verifiability (V).

## Annotation features

Inter-rater reliability for two annotators and 10% of the dataset:  
yes annotations for Annotator 1 (note skewedness), expected  
chance agreement (*Chance*), actual observed agreement  
(*Observed*) and Cohen's kappa (*Kappa*)

Set	A1Yes	Chance	Observed	Kappa
Core Event	0.733	0.601	0.923	0.808
Answerhood	0.834	0.721	0.982	0.936
Grammaticality	0.861	0.768	0.960	0.827
Interpretability	0.818	0.682	0.919	0.744
Verifiability	0.845	0.719	0.968	0.884
Intransitive	0.863	0.758	0.978	0.910
Transitive	0.780	0.653	0.949	0.853
Ditransitive	0.812	0.678	0.924	0.764

# Weighting features

Problem: My system provides a similarity score between 0 and 1.  
How can I evaluate system performance?

Feature-level performance:

- ▶ **MAP** to see how system rankings predict **individual features**;
  - ▶ Compare with? Some *holistic benchmark ranking* MAP;

Holistic performance (response quality):

- ▶ **Spearman** rank correlation: Compare system rankings with some *holistic benchmark ranking*;

I need **benchmark response rankings** for the NNS test set.

Solution: Determine feature weights and apply to annotations to obtain benchmark holistic scores and then rankings.



# Weighting features

Raters perform holistic preference test (blind to annotations)

<i>What is the boy doing?</i>	Pref?	Core	Ansr	Gram	Intrp	Verif
He is eating food.	yes	0	1	1	1	1
He may get fat eating.	no	0	0	1	1	0
He is hungry.	no	0	0	1	0	1
the boy is eating pizza	yes	1	1	1	1	1
The child is about to eat pizza.	yes	1	0	1	1	1
he eating.	no	0	1	0	1	1
Totals preferred responses		2	2	3	3	3
Totals dispreferred responses		0	1	2	2	2
Net preferred (pref - dispref)		2	1	1	1	1
Feature weight		.333	.167	.167	.167	.167
*Real feature weight		.365	.093	.055	.224	.263

## Weighting features

Preferences are reliable:

Agreement for two annotators on a sample of 300 response pairs:

Chance Agree	Observed Agree	Cohen's Kappa
0.621	0.883 (265/300)	0.692

## Benchmark rankings

- ▶ Obtain weighted annotation scores (WAS) by applying feature weights to binary annotations;
- ▶ Rank NNS test set responses by WAS to obtain weighted annotation ranking (WAR);

<i>What is happening?</i>	C	A	G	I	V	WAS	WAR
The boy is eating pizza	0.365	0.093	0.055	0.224	0.263	1.000	1
Child is eating pizza	0.365	0.093	0.000	0.224	0.263	0.945	2
Tommy is eating pizza	0.365	0.093	0.055	0.224	0.000	0.737	3
The boy's eating his favorite food	0.000	0.093	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.513	4
Pizza is this boy's favorite food	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	5

- ▶ Use WAR as benchmark;
  - ▶ Features: Get MAP for WAR, compare against system MAP;
  - ▶ Holistic: Get Spearman for system ranking vs. WAR;

# System configuration

Optimizing my system means searching for the settings that yield the best performance; i.e., system output best approximates benchmark (WAR).

- ▶ **Transitivity:** intransitive, transitive, ditransitive;
- ▶ **Targeting:**
  - ▶ targeted: *What is <the subject> doing?*
  - ▶ untargeted: *What is happening?*
- ▶ **Familiarity:** familiar, crowdsourced
- ▶ **Primacy:**
  - ▶ primary: NS model contains only 1st responses;
  - ▶ mixed: NS model: 50% 1st + 50% 2nd responses;
- ▶ **Term Representation:**
  - ▶ ldh: label-dependent-head; i.e., labeled dependencies;
  - ▶ xdh: dependent-head; i.e., unlabeled dependencies;
  - ▶ xdx: dependent only;

# System configuration

All parameters or variables and their settings:

Transitivity	Targeting	Familiarity	Primacy	Term Rep.
intransitive	targeted	familiar	primary	ldh
transitive	untargeted	crowdsourced	mixed	x dh
ditransitive				x dx

A **system configuration** combines one setting from each column.

If particular settings correlate highly with item features (intransitive / transitive / ditransitive; response complexity), I can optimize the system for new items.

# Sampling data

## **NNS test sets:**

- ▶ All experiments rank the same randomly sampled NNS test sets;
- ▶ 70 responses per PDT item (max available for NNS data);

## **NS models:**

- ▶ 14-response models (max available for familiar data);
  - ▶ I.e., I compare 14-response familiar models and 14-response crowdsourced models;
- ▶ 50-response models (max available for crowdsourced data);

## Annotation features experiments

# Analyzing NNS responses

The system works like this; for each item:

Generate a NS model:

1. dependency parse the collection of NS responses;
2. get tf-idf score for each unique dependency (via a large balanced corpus).

Score each NNS response:

1. As above: dependency parse, tf-idf;
2. Compare NS vs NNS tf-idf vectors:  $1 - \text{cosine} = \text{response score}$ .

Finally, the NNS responses are ranked by score, and the Spearman rank correlation between  $R_{wa}$  and the system is taken as the system configuration score for the item.

By selecting different parameter settings in this approach, I arrive at 12 different system configurations. Each configuration scores and ranks all NNS responses.



# System configurations

Consider this simplified set of 2 parameters  $\times$  2 settings = 4 configurations.

- ▶ **Dependency format:**

- ▶ **labeled:** e.g., `nsubj(eat,boy); nobj(eat,pizza)`
- ▶ **unlabeled:** e.g., `<null>(eat,boy); <null>(eat,pizza)`

- ▶ **NS response model:** Note: Each NS participant gave *two* responses per PDT item

- ▶ **first:** Model contains only the first response from NS
- ▶ **mixed:** Model is half first responses and half second responses

dep\model	first	mixed
labeled	lab_first	lab_mixed
unlabeled	unlab_first	unlab_mixed

## System configurations

- ▶ Score & rank NNS responses using different configurations;
- ▶ Compare with  $R_{wa}$  to get a Spearman correlation.

NNS	$S_{wa}$	$R_{wa}$	$S_{lf}$	$R_{lf}$	$S_{uf}$	$R_{uf}$
p1	0.63	4	0.53	4	0.11	5
p2	0.27	5	0.13	5	0.15	4
p3	0.90	2	0.91	1	0.68	1
p4	1.0	1	0.80	2	0.41	2
p5	0.85	3	0.77	3	0.20	3
Spearman $\rho$			.899		.799	
Spearman p-val			.037		.104	

- ▶ *lf* is *labeled\_first*; *uf* is *unlabeled\_first*:
- ▶ *labeled* for labeled dependencies (vs. *unlabeled*)
- ▶ *first* for models containing only the first response from NS (vs a *mix* of first and second responses)

# Results & Optimization

NTS: Multiple slides; describe most salient findings

# Summary

NTS: one slide

# Outlook

NTS: one slide

## References