

Chain-of-Syllogisms: Unifying Analysis & Conclusions Boosts Argument Mining

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Abstract

We propose a simple, syllogism-centric scheme for argument mining that builds full arguments by chaining “atomic” syllogisms. Unlike taxonomies that distinguish “claim” vs. “premise,” we collapse local (intermediate) conclusions into *analysis* units and reserve the “conclusion” label only for the document’s final outcome. This choice aligns with polysyllogistic reasoning and reduces label ambiguity. We formalize the scheme with concise guidelines for marking atomic links and test it on U.S. corporate reorganization cases under I.R.C. §368. In passage classification with a Linear SVC over several embeddings (TF-IDF, SBERT, Legal-BERT, ModernBERT) and an LLM classifier (GPT-5-mini), collapsing intermediate conclusions into *analysis* (4-class variant) consistently improves macro-F1 by 10–19 points over the 5-class setup across embeddings (Table 1).

Keywords

Legal argumentation, argument mining

Motivation and scheme. Recent work has pushed legal argument mining beyond sentence-level tags [1, 2] toward structured, logic-aware predictions (e.g., statutory reasoning in SARA [3, 4], relation prediction in CJEU decisions [5]). Our goal is to bridge single-passage classification and functional role labeling by *explicitly modeling polysyllogisms*: each atomic syllogism yields a local conclusion that immediately serves as a premise one level up, treating the latent argument as a proof tree with the overall conclusion at its root [6]. To reduce ambiguity during supervised learning (especially when passages are classified in isolation), we treat those local conclusions as *analysis* or *rules* and keep a *conclusion* label only for the document’s final disposition. This collapses intermediate conclusions into their functional analytic role and matches how chained inference is actually used. This mapping aligns with widely taught drafting heuristics such as IRAC/CRAC [7].

Data and annotation. We collected 40 U.S. corporate reorganization cases (1k–10k words), focusing on I.R.C. §368(a)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(F) and excluding (E),(G) to limit statutory variety. This report contains annotations by one expert on 26 of these documents, resulting in 361 valid classified passages. We defined a passage without any minimum or maximum length requirement, ensuring that it must serve a specific function within the argument. Passages are labeled as **analysis**, **rule**, **conclusion** (final only), **background facts** (BF), and **procedural history** (PH). Links connect premises (rules/analyses) to their immediate conclusions, forming chains. Several similar argument chain approaches have been proposed for annotating cases and tackling argument mining tasks [8, 1, 9, 10]. The primary improvement of our approach lies in focusing on the functional role within the argument, rather than isolating individual roles, and employing a recursive method to build these structures. The goal of the dataset is to create a

CMNA’25: The 25th International Workshop on Computational Models of Natural Argument, December 12, 2025, Online

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Embedding/LM	5 classes						4 classes				
	Avg	Analysis	BF	Conclusion	PH	Rule	Avg	Analysis	BF	PH	Rule
TF-IDF	0.59	0.59	0.66	0.47	0.60	0.64	0.72	0.74	0.68	0.68	0.76
SBERT	0.56	0.57	0.54	0.55	0.51	0.64	0.72	0.76	0.70	0.68	0.76
Legal-BERT	0.63	0.57	0.67	0.60	0.63	0.67	0.82	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.81
Modern-BERT	0.55	0.54	0.64	0.57	0.37	0.60	0.70	0.75	0.78	0.58	0.70
GPT-5-mini	0.65	0.57	0.64	0.45	0.76	0.82	0.75	0.79	0.59	0.79	0.81
Random	0.19	0.26	0.16	0.16	0.21	0.16	0.21	0.30	0.13	0.16	0.26

Table 1

Linear SVC results across embeddings and GPT-5-mini classification results (F1-score; US Corporate Reorganizations with five classes and with four classes; Avg = macro average). BF indicates background facts, PH indicates procedural history.

consistent and closely deductive structure that mimics human legal reasoning as closely as possible and provides an indication of logical deduction at each step of the argument construction.

Models. We compare (i) a Linear SVC [11] over TF-IDF, SBERT [12], Legal-BERT [13], and Modern-BERT [14], and (ii) a GPT-5-mini classifier prompted with brief label definitions (single-passage setting). Span classification experiments using the Linear SVC employed stratified 5-fold cross-validation for each embedding. The GPT-5-mini model was configured with low reasoning effort. ModernBERT provides an efficient long-context encoder with strong classification performance [14], while Legal-BERT offers domain-specific priors for legal text [13].

Results and Discussion. Table 1 shows macro F1 across embeddings and the LLM classifier. Moving from 5 classes to the 4-class variant (collapsing final *conclusions* into *analysis*) yields consistent gains: +0.13 (TF-IDF), +0.16 (SBERT), +0.19 (Legal-BERT), +0.15 (ModernBERT), and +0.10 (GPT-5-mini). Legal-BERT attains the highest average macro F1 among embeddings in the 4-class setup (0.82), while GPT-5-mini performs best under the 5-class setting. We include a random baseline for reference. We hypothesize that removing the ambiguous “final conclusion” label reduces overlap with *analysis*, improving separability when passages are judged out of context. As a secondary contribution, the *background facts* and *procedural history* provide span-level section annotations of U.S. case law, which are formally structured in ECHR [1] and CJEU [8] cases but only informally organized in U.S. cases, limiting previous work to heuristics for identifying section boundaries [15, 16].

Limitations and Future Work. Our evaluation uses a single annotator over 26 opinions and classifies passages independently; richer context (e.g., graph models) may recover information lost at sentence scope. Future work includes structured prediction over chains, explicit entailment links, and information retrieval to test argument completion.

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