Majid Laali

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Computer Skills

- **Languages**: Java, Python, C++.
- **ML tools**: Tensorflow, Tensorboard, Tensor2Tensor, Keras, WEKA, MATLAB.
- **NLP/IR tools**: UIMA, ClearTK, DKPro, Apache Lucene, Apache Solr, GATE.

Education

2013-2018 **Ph.D. in Computer Science (NLP)**, *Concordia University*, Montreal, QC, Canada.

Summer 2017 **Reinforcement Learning Summer School**, *Université de Montréal*, Montreal, QC, Canada.

Summer 2016 **Deep Learning Summer School**, *Université de Montréal*, Montreal, QC, Canada.

2009-2012 **M.Eng. in Machine Intelligence & Robotics (NLP)**, *University of Tehran*, Tehran, Iran.

2002-2008 **B.Eng. in Computer Engineering**, *University of Tehran*, Tehran, Iran.

Professional Experience

2018-present **Applied Scientist**,
Amazon (Alexa), Toronto,Canada, `https://www.amazon.com`.
- Collaborated with a team of researchers and developers to improve customer experience when using Alexa.

2017-2018 **Applied Research Scientist - Technical Lead**,
ElementAI, Montreal,Canada, `https://www.elementai.com`.
- Collaborated with a team of researchers and developers to build an AI solution into customers' businesses.
- Implemented different deep generative models.
- Built Speech to Text, Text to Text and Machine translation systems.
- Proposed solutions based on cutting-edge research in deep learning.
- Gained experience with Tensorflow infrastructure (e.g. Tensorflow Serving, Estimators and Datasets).

2014-2016 **Research and Development Engineer**,
Constellio, Montreal, Canada, `http://constellio.com`.
- Collaborated with a team of developers to enhance Constellio, a document management system.
- Developed different natural language processing components.
- Improved the information retrieval algorithm of Constellio.
- Developed a semi-automatic approach for the evaluation of the search engine of Constellio.
- Gained experience in Test-Driven Development, Apache Solr, Apache Lucene and Java.

2012-2013 **Technical Lead Engineer**,
Cyber Space Research Institute (ITRC), Tehran, Iran, `http://quranjooy.itrc.ac.ir`.
- Collaborated with a team of researchers to developed the first Persian Question Answering system.
- Led a team of four researchers.
- Designed the main pipeline of the QA system, motivated by IBM Watson.
- Gained experience in software design, GATE platform, Apache Lucene, and Java.

2007-2010 **Software Engineer**,
Faraazin Machine Translation project, Tehran, Iran, `http://www.faraazin.ir`.
- Collaborated with a team to develop the first English to Persian statistical machine translation system.
- Performed code refactoring and improved the design of the translation system.
- Mined online resources to improve the lexicon of the translation system.
- Gained experience in software design, Microsoft COM, and C++.

Community Involvement

- Organized programming contests at Concordia University and University of Tehran.
- Reviewer for ACL 2018, LREC 2017, COLING 2016, CICLing 2014/2015/2016, Canadian AI 2015, and FLAIRS-2014.
- Contributed to open source text-mining projects such as DKPro and ClearTk.

Honor and Awards

2017 RANLP-2017 Young Researcher Award.

2013-2015 Concordia Research Bursaries/Fellowships (GSSP). 30,000$

2013-2015 Concordia University International Tuition Fee Remission Award. 40,000$

2014, 2015 Concordia University Conference and Exposition Award. 3000$

2014, 2015 Conference Travel Support – Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. 1000$

2015 Centre for Pattern Recognition and Machine Intelligence Award. 500$

2012 ITRC Research Grant for Master Students. 1000$

2004, 2005 Honorable Mention and 6th Place, The ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest, Asia Regional Contests, Tehran site, Tehran.

Publications

- **Journal**

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. "Automatic Disambiguation of French Discourse Connectives". In: *International Journal of Computational Linguistics and Applications (IJCLA)* (2016), pp. 11–30.

- **Refereed Conferences**

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. "Improving Discourse Relation Projection to Build Discourse Annotated Corpora". In: *Proceedings of the 11th biennial Recent Advances in Natural Language conference (RANLP 2017)*. Varna, Bulgaria, Sept. 2017, 407–416 (Young Researcher Award).

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. "Automatic Mapping of French Discourse Connectives to PDTB Discourse Relations". In: *Proceedings of the 18th Annual SIGdial Meeting on Discourse and Dialogue (SIGDIAL 2017)*. Saarbrücken, Germany, Aug. 2017, pp. 1–6.

Majid Laali, Andre Cianflone, and Leila Kosseim. "The CLaC Discourse Parser at CoNLL-2016". In: *Proceedings of the 20th SIGNLL Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning - Shared Task (CoNLL 2016)*. Berlin, Germany, Aug. 2016, pp. 92–99.

Elnaz Davoodi, Leila Kosseim, Felix-Herve Bachand, Majid Laali, and Emmanuel Argollo. "Classification of Textual Genres using Discourse Information". In: *Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on Intelligent Text Processing and Computational Linguistics (CICLing-2016)*. Konya, Turkey, Apr. 2016, 12 pages.

Majid Laali, Elnaz Davoodi, and Leila Kosseim. "The CLaC Discourse Parser at CoNLL-2015". In: *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning - Shared Task (CoNLL 2015)*. Beijing, China, July 2015, pp. 56–60.

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. "Inducing discourse connectives from parallel texts". In: *Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on Computational Linguistics: Technical Papers (COLING 2014)*. Dublin, Ireland, Aug. 2014, pp. 610–619.

Amin Farmahini-Farahani, Majid Laali, Amir Moghimi, Sied Mehdi Fakhraie, and Saeed Safari. "Mesh architecture for hardware implementation of Particle Swarm Optimization". In: *Proceedings IEEE International Conference on Intelligent & Advanced Systems (ICIAS 2007)*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: IEEE, 2007, pp. 1300–1305.

- **Invited Talks/Posters**

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. *Transferring Knowledge Between Languages Using Parallel Texts*. Invited talk at Polytechnique, Université de Montréal. Montreal, Feb. 2017.

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. *Automatic Labeling of French Discourse Connectives*. Poster presented at the Data Science Research Centre, Concordia University. Montreal, Sept. 2016.

Majid Laali and Leila Kosseim. *Inducing Discourse Connectives from Parallel Texts*. Invited talk at Recherche appliquée en linguistique informatique (RALI), Université de Montréal. Montreal, July 2014.

- **Thesis**

Majid Laali. "Feature Selection for Extracting Multiword Expressions". Master's Thesis. Tehran, Iran: University of Tehran, Aug. 2013.