

11-411/11-611 Natural Language Processing

Syntax

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Language Technologies Institute

Learning Objectives

- Describe dependency grammar and how it differs from phrase structure (or constituency) grammar.
- Identify several NLP applications for dependency parses.
- Describe the Universal Dependencies and be able to apply several common

- dependency relations that it defines.
- Implement transition-based parsing for dependencies.
- Be able to find appropriate pretrained models dependency parsing supporting a range of tasks.

Different perspectives on syntax

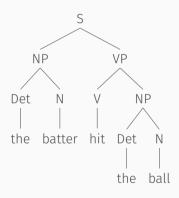
There are Two Major Approaches to Syntax in NLP

Two approaches:

- Syntax means taking sentences, dividing them into phrases and dividing those phrases into smaller phases until you arrive at individual words, yielding a tree of "constitutents"
- Syntax means taking sentences and characterizing the relationships between pairs of words in the sentence, yielding a tree or graph of "heads" and "dependents"

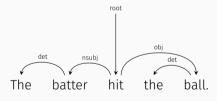
Phrase Structure Grammar is also Called Constituency Grammar

- The first approach is called PHRASE STRUCTURE GRAMMAR OF CONSTITUENCY GRAMMAR.
- · Basic unit constituent
- Used by the parsers in the interpreters/compilers of most programming languages



Dependency Grammar Is Based On Bilexical Dependencies

- The second approach is called DEPENDENCY GRAMMAR.
- · Basic element BILEXICAL DEPENDENCY



Introduction to Dependency
Grammar

Words Relate to Other Words

Words relate to other words:

- Nouns can be subjects or objects of verbs
- Adjectives can be modifiers of nouns
- · Adverbs can be modifiers of verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs

Dependency grammar represents these relations (subject, object, modifier, etc.)

The Bilexical Dependency is the Basic Unit of Dependency Grammar

The basic unit in dependency grammar is a bilexical dependency, a "link" between two words: a head (governor) and a dependent.



The Bilexical Dependency is the Basic Unit of Dependency Grammar

In this tree for the sentence *Birds sing*, *sing* is the head because the sentence refers to a singing event. *Sing* is portrayed as a predicate that takes one argument, *birds*. The arrow points from the head (*sing*) to the dependent (*birds*). The label on the arc indicates the type of dependency. In this case, *birds* is the *nsubj* (noun subject) of *sing*.



Dependents Contribute to the Meaning of Heads

Head provides the basic content (meaning, grammatical content)

Dependent modifies or serves as an argument of the head

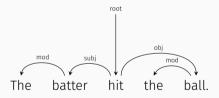
What is a head?

Each phrase (noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) has a word that makes it the kind of phrase it is.

- · A noun is the head of a noun phrase (the tall **student** in the back row)
- · A verb is the head of a verb phrase (quickly **ate** a lot of doughnuts)
- · A verb is also the head of a sentence (I ate a lot of doughnuts.)
- · A preposition is the head of a prepositional phrase (in the classroom)
- · An adjective is the head of an adjective phrase (so very **proud** of my son)

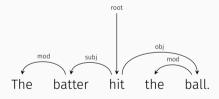
Dependencies Form a Tree

We will focus on dependency representations where all the words are connected, each dependent depends on exactly one head, and the arcs don't cross, although, we will see later that not all sentences can be represented this way.

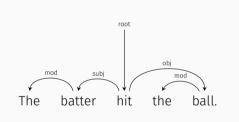


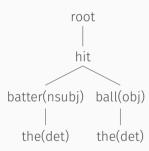
Dependencies Form a Tree

- Typically, the head of a sentence is a verb
- Every word is the dependent of one head
- · The head verb is a dependent of ROOT



Three notations for dependency trees





1	the	2	det
2	batter	3	nsub
3	hit	root	
4	the	5	det
5	ball	3	obi

UD Treebank Example

```
# sent id = GUM academic discrimination-4
\# s prominence = 4
# s type = decl
# transition = null
# text = Personal experiences of discrimination and bias have been the focus of much social science research.
# newpar
# newpar block = p(6 s)
        Personal
                        personal
                                        ADJ
                                                 77
                                                         Degree=Pos
                                                                                  amod
                                                                                          2:amod Discourse=cont
        experiences
                        experience
                                        NOUN
                                                 NNS
                                                         Number=Plur
                                                                         10
                                                                                 nsubi
                                                                                          10:nsubi
        of
                of
                        ADP.
                                TN
                                                         case
                                                                 4:case
        discrimination
                        discrimination
                                        NOUN
                                                         Number=Sing
                                                                                          2:nmod:of
                                                                                                          Entity
                                                                                 nmod
        and
                and
                        CCONT
                                cc
                                                         cc
                                                                 6:00
        hias
                bias
                        NOUN
                                        Number=Sing
                                                         4
                                                                         2:nmod:of[4:coni:and
                                                                                                  Entity=(10-abs
                                NN
                                                                 coni
                                        Mood=Ind|Number=Plur|Person=3|Tense=Pres|VerbForm=Fin
        have
                have
                        AHY
                                VBP
                                                                                                          aux
                        ΔUX
                                        Tense=Past|VerbForm=Part
                                                                         10
8
        heen
                he
                                VBN
                                                                                 cop
                                                                                          10:cop
                                        Definite=Def|PronType=Art
9
        the
                the
                        DET
                                                                         10
                                                                                 det
                                                                                          10:det Entity=(11-abs
        focus
                focus
                                        Number=Sing
10
                        NOUN
                                NN
                                                                         0:root
                                                                 root
11
        of
                of
                        ADP
                                TN
                                                 15
                                                                 15:case
                                                         case
12
        much
                much
                        ADT
                                77
                                        Degree=Pos
                                                         15
                                                                 den
                                                                         15:dep
                                                                                 Entity=(12-abstract-new-cf5-4-
13
        social
                social
                        ADI
                                        Degree=Pos
                                                         14
                                                                 amod
                                                                         14:amod Entity=(13-abstract-new-cf8-2-
14
        science science NOUN
                                        Number=Sing
                                                         15
                                                                 compound
                                                                                 15: compound
                                                                                                  Entity=13)
                                                         Number=Sing
                                                                                 nmod
                                                                                          10:nmod:of
15
        research
                        research
                                        NOUN
                                                 NIN
                                                                         10
                                                                                                          Entity
16
                        PUNCT
                                                 10
                                                         punct
                                                                 10:punct
```

About dependency trees

- Each word is dependent on one other word
- To build a tree, you have to decide for each word, which other word it is a dependent of and what its relationship is

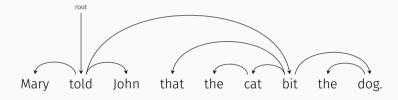
1	the	2	det
2	batter	3	nsubj
3	hit	root	
4	the	5	det
5	ball	3	obj

- 1 Mary
- 2 told root
- 3 John
- 4 that
- 5 the
- 6 cat
- 7 bit
- 8 the
- 9 dog

- 1 Mary 2 2 told root
- 3 John 2
- 4 that 7
- 5 the
- 6 cat
- 7 bit
- 8 the
- 9 dog

Mary 2
 told root
 John 2
 that 7
 the 6
 cat 7
 bit 8
 the 9
 dog

The tree (without labels)



What is a treebank?

A treebank is a corpus of sentences where each sentence has been parsed by humans or parsed with a parser and corrected by humans.

- There are phrase structure treebanks such as the Penn Treebanks.
- There are dependency treebanks such as the Universal Dependency Treebanks and the Prague Dependency Treebanks.

What is Universal Dependency

Universal Dependency (UD) started in 2013 with the goal of having treebanks for many languages using the same annotation guidelines. There are now hundreds of UD treebanks.

UD Dependency Labels

37 Dependency labels for Universal Dependencies

	Nominals	Clauses	Modifier words	Function Words
Core arguments	nsubj obj iobj	csubj ccomp xcomp		
Non-core dependents	obl vocative expl dislocated	advc1	advmod* discourse	aux cop mark
Nominal dependents	nmod appos nummod	acl	amod	det clf case
Coordination	MWE	Loose	Special	Other
conj cc	fixed flat compound	<u>list</u> parataxis	orphan goeswith reparandum	<u>punct</u> root dep

Six Dependency Relations Common in English

nsubj the subject noun of a verb
obj the object of a verb
ccomp the complement of a verb
amod the adjectival modifier of a noun
det the determiner of a noun
mark a word marking a clause as subordinate

An Illustration of Six UD Relations



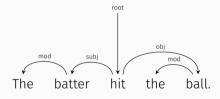
trees

Some problems with dependency

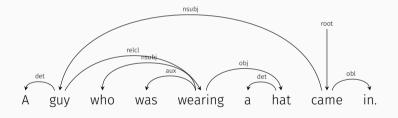
Three issues concerning dependency trees

- Non-projectivity
- \cdot Dependents connected to more than one head
- · What to do with and

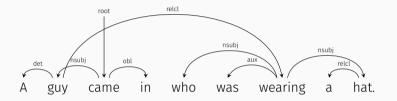
Projective dependency trees: the arcs don't cross



Projective: the arcs don't cross

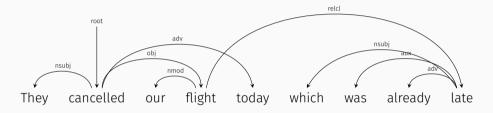


Non-projective: crossing arcs



The relcl arc crosses the root arc. The relcl arc from "guy" to "wearing" is non-projective because there is not a path from "guy" to every word between "guy" and "wearing". In particular, there is not a path from "guy" to "came" and "in" following arrows only in the direction they are pointing.

Non-projective: crossing arcs

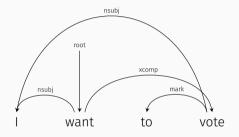


The arc from "flight" to "late" is non-projective because there is not a path from "flight" to every word between "flight" and "late". In particular, there is no path from "flight" to "today".

Graphs vs Trees

- · In a tree, each node has one parent.
- In a graph, a node can have more than one parent.

This is a graph

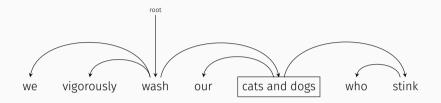


This graph indicates that "I" is the subject of "want" and "I" is also the subject of "vote". This is important for semantic interpretation. We need to know the arguments of each verb.

Why are non-projectivity and graphs important?

Graphs and non-projective trees are more linguistically expressive than projective trees, but they require different algorithms than projective trees. So, you have to weigh the pros and cons of allowing graphs and non-projectivity.

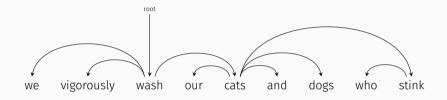
It Is not Obvious How to Model Coordination in Dependency Grammars



Most likely the most important problem UD.

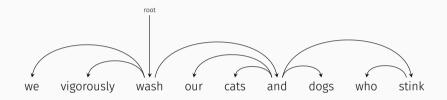
Terminology: the part of speech of and is conjunction. Cats and dogs is a conjoined noun phrase. Cats and dogs are conjuncts. A conjoined phrase is also called a coordinate structure, an instance of the phonomenon of coordination.

Proposal 1: The First Conjunct is the Head



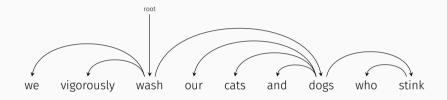
Make the first conjunct head?

Proposal 2: The Conjunction Is the Head



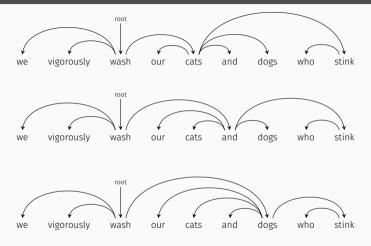
Make the coordinating conjunction the head?

Proposal 3: the Second Conjunct Is the Head



Make the second conjunct the head?

The Three Proposals for Coordination, Compared



What is a common property among these trees?

Dependency labels are

semantic roles

grammatical relations, not

Semantic Roles Are Important to NLP

Often, in NLP, we want to know the semantic roles of the noun phrases in a sentence.

Agent the doer of an action

Patient the one to whom an action is done

Instrument that with which an action is done

etc.

The student smacked the moth with a swatter.

AGENT PATIENT INSTRUMENT

What are grammatical relations?

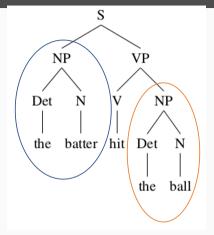
Grammatical relations affect the order of words and the presence of morphemes.

- · Subject (in English)
 - before the verb
 - agrees with the verb (She runs/We run)
 - \cdot can be I, me, he, she, we, they
- Object (in English)
 - · immediately after the verb
 - · can be me, him, her, us, them
- Oblique (in English)
 - preceded by a preposition (at, on, by, over)
 - · can be me, him, her, us, them

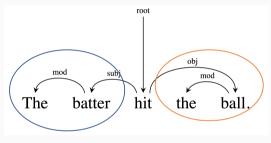
Semantic roles are not identical to grammatical relations

- Subject is agent
 - The student opened the door with a key.
- Subject is patient
 - The door was opened with a key.
 - The door opens with a key.
- Subject is instrument
 - The key opened the door.
- There is an agent, but it isn't the subject.
 - The door was opened by the student.

Dependency Labels are Grammatical Relations



Constituency trees represent grammatical relations indirectly. Subject is the NP under S. Object is the NP under VP.



Dependency labels represent grammatical relations explicitly.

Later in the semester we will learn about representations of semantic roles

The syntax of English questions in dependency grammar

Types of questions

- · Yes-no questions
 - · Can I play now?
 - · Do you want some ice cream?
- Wh-questions
 - What is your name?
 - · Who are you?
 - · Why are you doing that?
- Alternative questions
 - · Is she a student or a teacher?
- Tag questions
 - · You're going, aren't you?
 - · They haven't left, have they?

English Auxiliary Verbs

Have not always an auxiliary verb copula Ве Will modal Would modal modal Can Could modal Shall modal Should modal May modal Might modal Must modal

Sequences of English auxiliary verbs

The order of auxiliary verbs in English is modal-have-be-be. They are all optional, but when they are present, they have to be in that order. The longest sequence of auxiliary verbs you can have is one modal auxiliary (will, would, can, could, shall, should, may, might, must) followed by "have" followed by two kinds of "be".

They must have been being arrested.

Auxiliary verbs in yes-no questions: Part 1

Put the first auxiliary verb before the subject. The auxiliary verb will not necessarily be at the beginning of the sentence.

Yesterday she was swimming.

When they got home, they **could** have been drunk.

Yesterday was she swimming?

When they got home, **could** they have been drunk?

Auxiliary verbs in yes-no questions: Part 2

If there is no auxiliary verb, put "do", "does", or "did" before the subject.

They ate potatoes.

Did they eat potatoes?

Do they eat potatoes?

He laughs a lot.

Does he laugh a lot?

You yawn during lectures. **Do** you yawn during lectures?

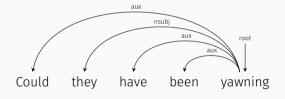
Wh-questions

To make a sentence into a wh-question, you have to remove something from the sentence and put a corresponding wh-word at the front of the sentence. You also have to put an auxiliary verb before the subject (unless you have removed the subject).

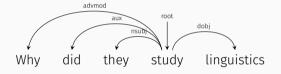
I saw Alex Who did I see?
Alex saw me Who saw me?

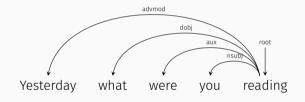
I aced it by studying. How did you ace it?

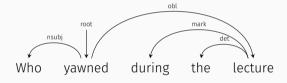
I am studying **to get an A**. **Why** are you studying?







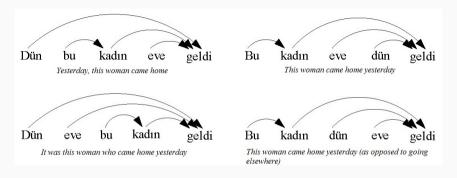






Examples of Dependency Trees from Other Languages

Dependency Examples from Turkish: free word order

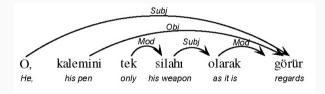


Note that in these examples, the arrows point from dependent to head.

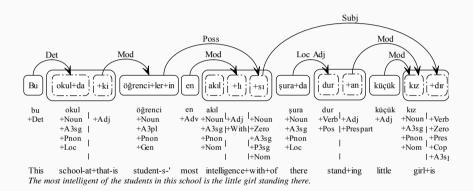
Turkish Lexicon:

dün	(yesterday)	bu	(this)
geldi	(came)	kadin	(woman)
eve	(to home)		

Translate this sentence into English

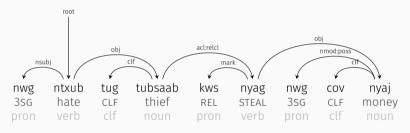


Dependency Examples from Other Languages



A Dependency Tree from Mong Leng

A sentence from Mong Leng (also called Green Hmong or 苗语)



Dependency Treebanks

Dependency Treebanking Is Easy (or Easier)

Creating dependency treebanks seems to be easier than constituency treebanks:

- · Simpler data structure
- · More intuitive tools
- · Requires less expertise
 - Deciding which word to connect to and what label to use is easier to learn than testing for constituents.

As a result, there are now many dependency treebanks.

Universal Dependencies Treebanks

- · Over 200 treebanks in almost 100 languages
- · UD annotation scheme
- Standard, easy to process, CoNLL-U file format (the tabular format)
- $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Despite attempts at standardization, considerable variation in conventions, quality

Tools and resources for dependency parsing

Dependency Parsers: UD

- · UDPipe
 - · Widely used
 - · Provides parsing, morphological analysis, etc.
 - · A little harder to use that Stanza
- · Stanza
 - Newer than UDPipe
 - · Performs better (in my experience)
 - Pure Python—easier to integrate into NLP systems

Dependency Parsers: Other

- · Stanford Parser
 - · High quality and widely used
 - Pretrained models for English and Chinese
 - · Java (using efficiently from Python is not hard, but not easy)
- SpaCy (English)
 - · Convenient Python library
 - Performs many other NLP tasks (in addition to parsing)
 - · For the most part, English only

Dependency Parsing

Dependency Tree: Definition

Let $\mathbf{x} = [x_1, \dots, x_n]$ be a sentence. We add a special ROOT symbol as " x_0 ".

A dependency tree consists of a set of tuples $[p, c, \ell]$ where

- $p \in \{0, ..., n\}$ is the index of a parent.
- $c \in \{1, ..., n\}$ is the index of a *child*.
- $\ell \in \mathcal{L}$ is a label.

Different annotation schemes define different label sets \mathcal{L} , and different constraints on the set of tuples. Most commonly:

- The tuple is represented as a directed edge from x_p to x_c with label ℓ .
- The directed edges form an directed tree with x_0 as the root (sometimes denoted as ROOT).

Two Approaches to Dependency Parsing

1. Transition-based parsing

- · Proceed through a sequence of actions, building up a representation step by step
- \cdot The representation, and any step, depends on the representations that came before
- · Compare: HMMs for POS tagging

2. Graph-based parsing

- · Start with probabilities for each edge (in phrase structure parsing, each constituent)
- · Apply some sort of dynamic programming
- · Compare: CRF for POS tagging

Transition-based Parsing

 $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Process \boldsymbol{x} once, from left to right, making a sequence of greedy parsing decisions.

Transition-based Parsing

- \cdot Process x once, from left to right, making a sequence of greedy parsing decisions.
- Formally, the parser is a **state machine** (*not* a finite-state machine) whose state is represented by a stack *S* and a buffer *B* (which you can also view as a queue).

Transition-Based Parsing is a Simple Game with a Simple Board and Simple Moves

Board

- Buffer (of words) (B)—like a Python *list*
- · Stack (of *Tree*s) (S)—like a Python *deque*

Moves

```
SHIFT
S.push(Tree(B.popleft())
RIGHT-ARC
u=S.pop(); v=S.pop(); S.push(v.right_arc_to(u))
LEFT-ARC
u=S.pop(); v=S.pop(); S.push(u.left_arc_to(v))
```

Transition-based Parsing

 \cdot Initialize the buffer to contain ${\bf x}$ and the stack to contain the ROOT symbol.



- · We can take one of three actions:
 - SHIFT the word at the front of the buffer B onto the stack S.
 - RIGHT-ARC: $u = pop(S); v = pop(S); push(S, v \rightarrow u)$.
 - LEFT-ARC: u = pop(S); v = pop(S); $push(S, v \leftarrow u)$. (for labeled parsing, add labels to the LEFT-ARC and RIGHT-ARC transitions.)

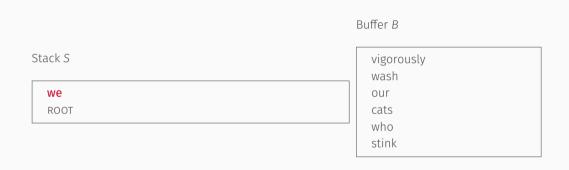
A Classifier Calls the Tune

How does the parser know which step to take next?

- This is a three-way **classification** problem (or, for parsing labeled dependencies, more)
- · Various classifiers have been used
 - · Traditional classifiers
 - · Feed-forward neural nets
 - · etc.
- What features? Stay tuned!

Buffer B we Stack S vigorously wash ROOT our cats who stink

Actions:



Actions: SHIFT

Stack S

vigorously

we

ROOT

Buffer B

wash

our

cats

who

stink

Actions: SHIFT SHIFT

Stack S

Buffer B

wash

vigorously

we

ROOT

our

cats

who

stink

Actions: SHIFT SHIFT SHIFT



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC

Stack S



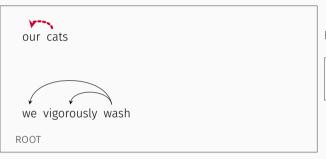
Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT

Stack S



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT

Stack S

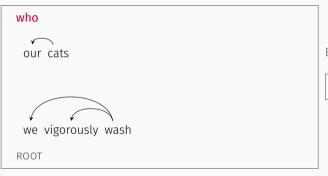


Buffer B

who stink

Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC

Stack S



Buffer B

stink

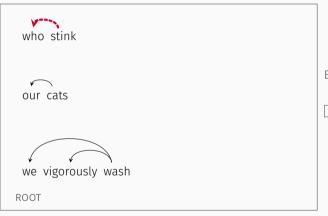
Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT

Stack S



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT

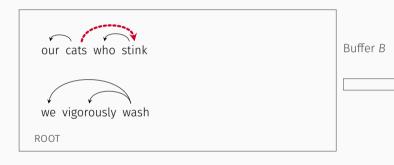
Stack S



Buffer B

Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC

Stack S



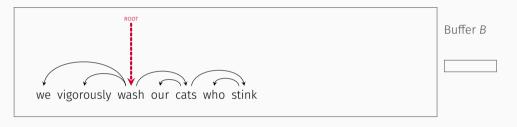
Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC RIGHT-ARC

Stack S



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC RIGHT-ARC RIGHT-ARC

Stack S



Actions: SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC SHIFT SHIFT LEFT-ARC RIGHT-ARC RIGHT-ARC

• At each iteration, choose among $\{SHIFT, RIGHT-ARC, LEFT-ARC\}$.

- At each iteration, choose among {SHIFT, RIGHT-ARC, LEFT-ARC}.
 - Actually, among all $\mathcal{L}\text{-labeled}$ variants of RIGHT- and LEFT-ARC.

- At each iteration, choose among {SHIFT, RIGHT-ARC, LEFT-ARC}.
 - · Actually, among all \mathcal{L} -labeled variants of RIGHT- and LEFT-ARC.
- Training data: Dependency treebank trees converted into "oracle" transition sequence.

- At each iteration, choose among {SHIFT, RIGHT-ARC, LEFT-ARC}.
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 - Each word gets SHIFTEd once and participates as a child in one ARC.

Features for Transition Parsing Come from the Configuration

Where do the features for making parsing decisions come from?

- · The words in the buffer
- The words in the stack (e.g. the roots of the trees)
- · The children of these roots
- The POS tags of the words
- History of actions

Feature combinations are important:

- When parsing English, suppose that the second word in S is a verb and the first is a noun.
- The model should probably choose LEFT-ARC

Example of Features: Feed-Forward Neural Transition Parser

Here are the features extracted by Chen and Manning's (2014) feed-forward neural model for shift-reduce parsing:

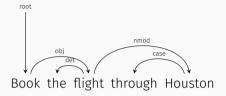
- The top three words on *S* and *B* (6 features) $s_1, s_2, s_3, b_1, b_2, b_3$
- The two leftmost/rightmost children of the top two words on S (8 features) $lc_1(s_i), lc_2(s_i), rc_1(s_i), rc_2(s_i)$ i = 1, 2
- The leftmost and rightmost grandchildren (4 features) $lc_1(lc_1(s_i)), rc_1(rc_1(s_i))$ i = 1, 2
- POS tags for all words invoked above (18 features)
- · Arc labels of all children/grandchildren invoked above (12 features)

But Wait, What about Training?

Problem: Transition-based parsing is carried out through a sequence of atomic operations (Shift, Left-Arc, Right-Arc). Treebanks have whole trees.

Solution: Create a training oracle to train the oracle (classifier). "derive appropriate training instances consisting of configuration-transition pairs from a treebank by simulating the operation of a parser in the context of a reference dependency tree. We can deterministically record correct parser actions at each step as we progress through each training example, thereby creating the training set we require."

Creating Training Oracle: An Example



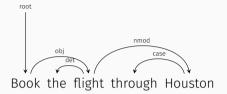
Step 1

- LEFT-ARC is not applicable since root ← book is not in the reference tree.
- RIGHT-ARC is not applicable since root → book is not in the reference tree.
- 3. The only option is to SHIFT the onto the stack

Step 2

- LEFT-ARC is not applicable since book ← the is not in the reference tree.
 - RIGHT-ARC is not applicable since book → the is not in the reference tree.
 - 3. The only option is to SHIFT *flight* onto the stack.

Creating Training Oracle: An Example



- Step 1
- LEFT-ARC is not applicable since root ← book is not in the reference
- RIGHT-ARC is not applicable since root → book is not in the reference
- 3. Shift is the only option

- Step 2: Same conditions hold. SHIFT.
- Step 3: Same conditions hold. Shift.
- Step 5: Can we add arc book → flight?

 It's present in the reference
 but would prevent the
 attachment of Houston since
 flight would have been
 removed from the stack. The
 preconditions for RIGHT-ARC
 are not satisfied and SHIFT is
 the only option.

Transition-based Parsing: Remarks

- · Can also be applied to phrase-structure parsing. Keyword: "shift-reduce" parsing.
- The algorithm for making decisions doesn't need to be greedy; can maintain multiple hypotheses.
 - · e.g., beam search
- Potential flaw: the classifier is typically trained under the assumption that previous classification decisions were all correct. As yet, there is no principled solution to this problem, but there are approximations based on "dynamic oracles".

Dependency Parsing Evaluation

- Unlabeled attachment score (UAS): Did you identify the head and the dependent correctly?
- Labeled attachment score (LAS): Did you identify the head and the dependent AND the label correctly?

Questions?