

Natural Language Understanding, Generation, and Machine Translation

Lecture 20: Neural Parsing

Shay Cohen

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School of Informatics

University of Edinburgh

scohen@inf.ed.ac.uk

The Story so Far

Neural Parsing

Potential Problems

Results

Parsing with Transformers

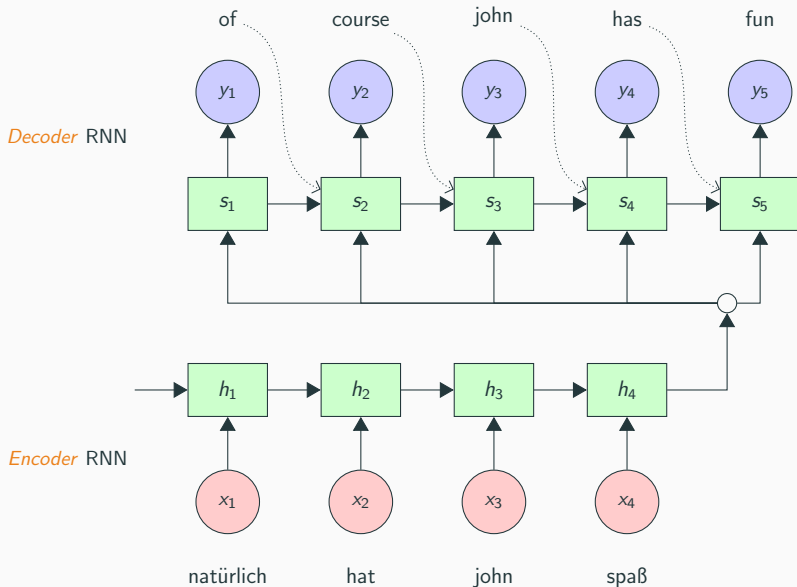
Reading: [Vinyals et al.2015]; optional: [Kitaev and Klein2018]

The Story so Far

Encoder-Decoder Architecture

- So far, we have used the encoder-decoder architecture for machine translation and other tasks (T5).
- But it can be used for any task where both the input and output are sequences of symbols.
- In this lecture, we will use it for **syntactic parsing**.
- We will see an LSTM-with-attention encoder-decoder, but also discuss a transformer-based model.
- This approach can be used to generate **any structured representation** that can be linearized (e.g., trees, graphs).

Reminder: Encoder-Decoder Architecture

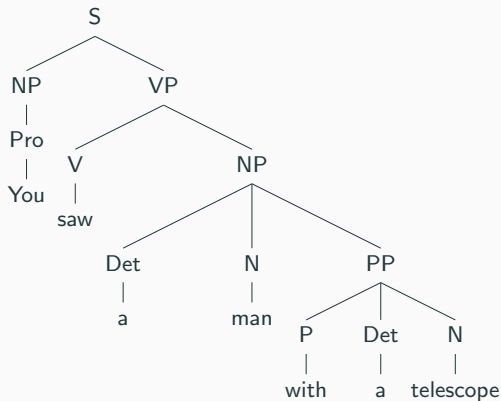


Neural Parsing

Parsing

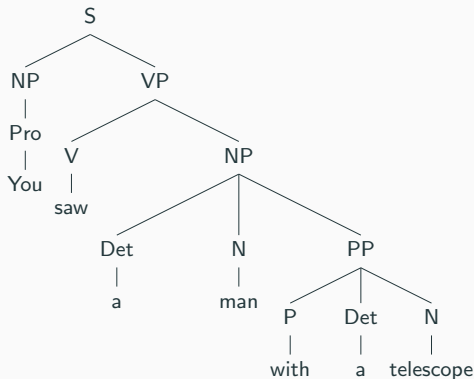
Parsing is the task of turning a sequence of words:

(1) You saw a man with a telescope. into a syntax tree:



Linearizing the Input

But how can we use an encoder-decoder model for parsing? The input is a sequence, but the output is not.



We can **linearize** the syntax tree:

(S (NP (Pro You)) (VP (V saw) (NP (Det a) (N man) (PP (P with) (Det
a) (N telescope))))))

Linearizing the Input

Now we have a sequence that represents the syntax tree:

(S (NP (Pro You)) (VP (V saw) (NP (Det a) (N man) (PP (P with) (Det a) (N telescope))))))

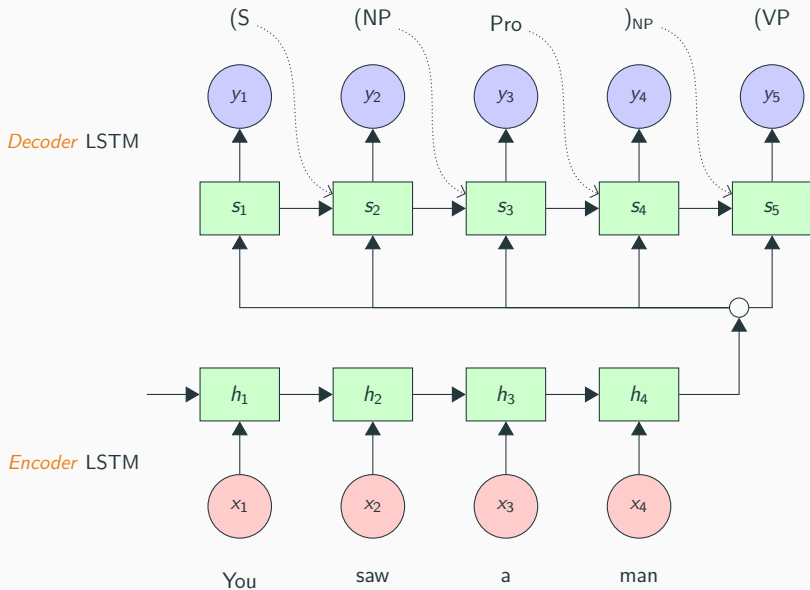
We can simplify it by stripping out the words:

(S (NP Pro) (VP V (NP Det N (PP P Det N))))

And we can make it easier to process by annotating also the closing brackets:

(S (NP Pro)_{NP} (VP V (NP Det N (PP P Det N)_{PP})_{NP})_{VP})_S

An Encoder-Decoder for Parsing



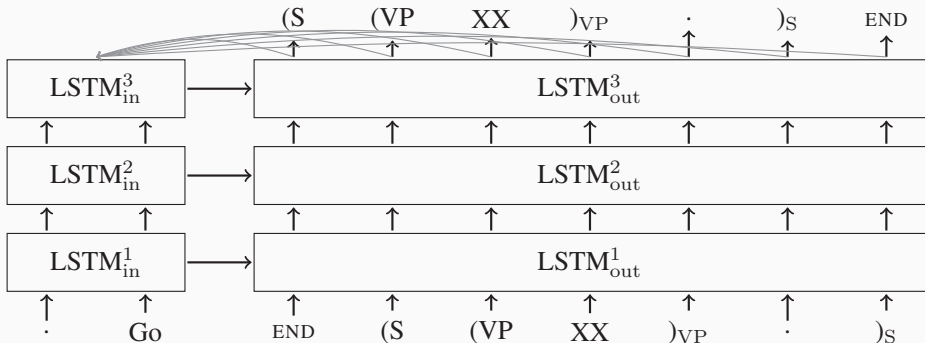
An Encoder-Decoder for Parsing

Essentially, that is our parsing model! But in order for this to work properly, we also need to:

- Add an end-of-sequence symbol, as output sequences can vary in length.
- Reverse the input string: results in small performance gain.
- Make the network deeper. [Vinyals et al.2015] use three LSTM layers for both encoder and decoder.
- Add attention. This essentially works like the encoder-decoder with attention we saw for MT (lecture 7).
- Use pre-trained word embeddings as input (here: word2vec).
- Get lots of training data. [Vinyals et al.2015] use an existing parser (the Berkeley parser) to parse a large amount of text, which they then use as training data.

An Encoder-Decoder for Parsing

This is how they draw their model architecture:



Potential Problems

Potential Problems

But wait! Can this really work? What about:

- How do we make sure that opening and closing brackets match?
Else we won't have a well-formed tree!
- How do we associate the words in the input with the leaves of the tree in the output?
- The output sequence can be longer than the input sequence, isn't this a problem?
- How can I make sure that the model outputs the best overall sequence, not just the best symbol at each time step?

Potential Problems

How to deal with these problems:

- This is really rare (0.8–1.5% of sentences). And if it occurs, just fix the brackets in post-processing (add brackets to beginning or end of the sequence).
- You could just associate each input word with a PoS in the output, in sequence order. But in practice: only the tree is evaluated. [Vinyals et al.2015] replace all PoS tags with XX.
- Not a problem, also happens in MT. And only the tree is evaluated.
- Use beam search to generate the output (as in MT). However, in practice, beam size has very little impact on performance.

Results

Training corpora used:

- Wall Street Journal (WSJ): treebank with 40k manually annotated sentences.
- BerkeleyParser corpus: 90k sentences from WSJ and several other treebanks, and 11M sentences parsed with Berkeley Parser.
- High-confidence corpus: 90k sentences from WSJ from several treebanks, and 11M sentences for which two parsers produce the same tree (length resampled).

Results

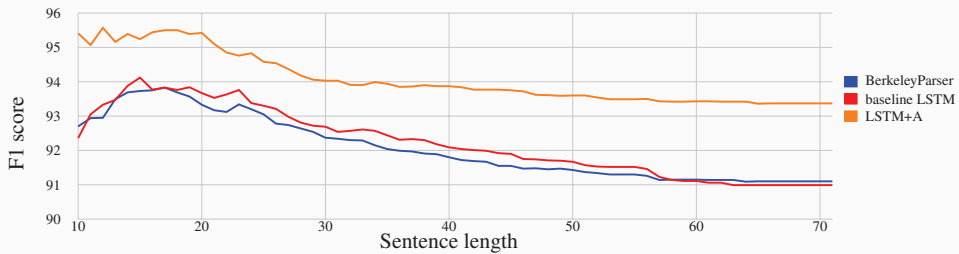
Results reported by [Vinyals et al.2015]:

Parser	Training Set	WSJ 22	WSJ 23
baseline LSTM+D	WSJ only	< 70	< 70
LSTM+A+D	WSJ only	88.7	88.3
LSTM+A+D ensemble	WSJ only	90.7	90.5
baseline LSTM	BerkeleyParser corpus	91.0	90.5
LSTM+A	high-confidence corpus	92.8	92.1
Petrov et al. (2006) [12]	WSJ only	91.1	90.4
Zhu et al. (2013) [13]	WSJ only	N/A	90.4
Petrov et al. (2010) ensemble [14]	WSJ only	92.5	91.8
Zhu et al. (2013) [13]	semi-supervised	N/A	91.3
Huang & Harper (2009) [15]	semi-supervised	N/A	91.3
McClosky et al. (2006) [16]	semi-supervised	92.4	92.1

The second half of the table lists results for various versions of the Berkeley parser.

Current state of the art: 95–96.

Results



Summary of results:

- The encoder-decoder model only works if attention is used.
- Ensembling models helps. Which is almost always the case.
- If we have a lot of training data, we get a large boost. And even the simple model without attention starts to work.
- A simple encoder-decoder model can match the performance of the Berkeley parser (a probabilistic chart parser; $O(n^3)$ complexity).
- Even though we use an LSTM, performance by sentence length is same or better than the Berkeley parser.

Analyzing the Attention

- Attention matrix shows that the model focuses on one word as it produces the parse tree.
- It moves through the input sequence monotonically (left to right).
- Model learns stack-like behavior when producing the output.
- Note that if model focuses on position i , that state has information for all words after i (input is reversed).
- In some cases, the model skips words.

Parsing with Transformers

Parsing with Transformers

Could we use transformers for parsing, wouldn't that work even better? Yes! We will briefly look at [[Kitaev and Klein2018](#)]:

- They use a transformer to encode the input.
- This results in a “context aware summary vector” (embedding) for each input word.
- The embedding encodes word, PoS tag, and position information.
- The embedding layers are combined to obtain **span scores**.
- The attention blocks and the attention heads are just like in [[Vaswani et al.2017](#)].
- But they also try **factored attention heads**, which separate position and content information.

Parsing with Transformers

The **decoder** of [Kitaev and Klein2018] works as follows:

A real-valued score $s(T)$ is assigned to a tree T :

$$s(T) = \sum_{(i,j,l) \in T} s(i,j,l)$$

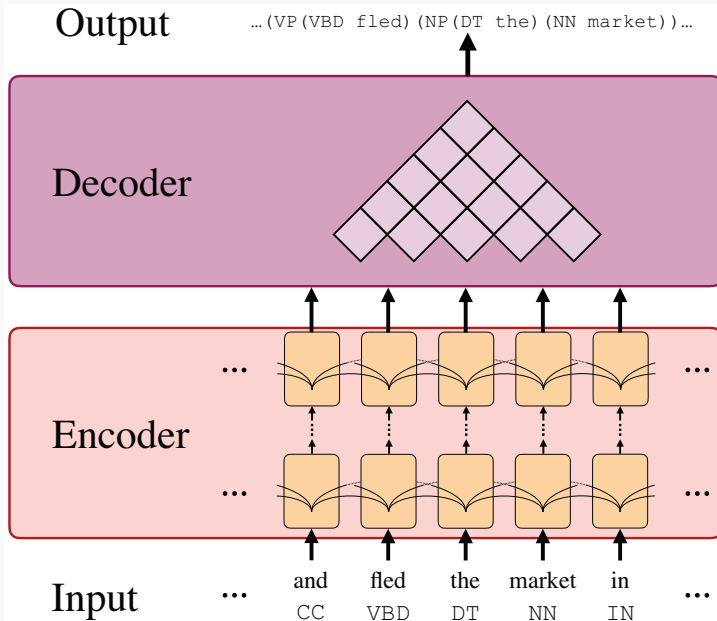
where $s(i,j,l)$ is a score for the constituent located between position i and position j with label l .

At test time, we compute:

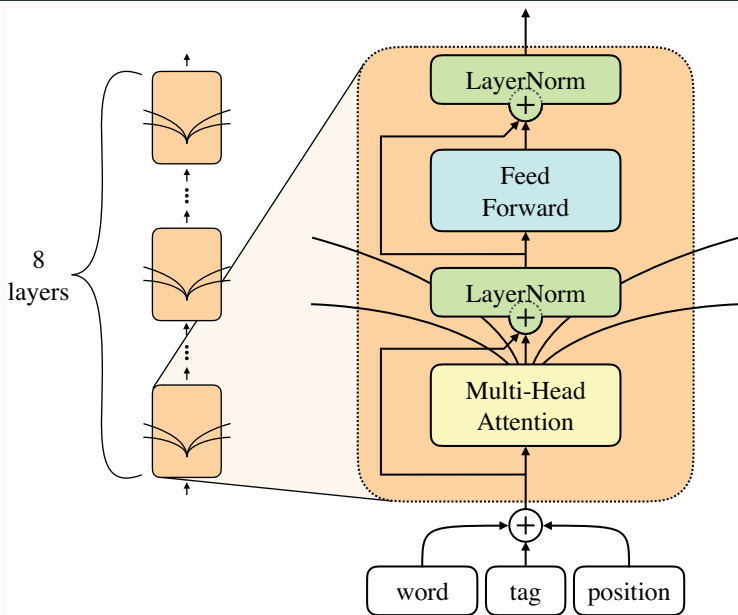
$$\hat{T} = \operatorname{argmax}_T s(T)$$

This can be found efficiently using CYK (remember ANLP?). **This gives us the optimal output sequence, unlike beam search!**

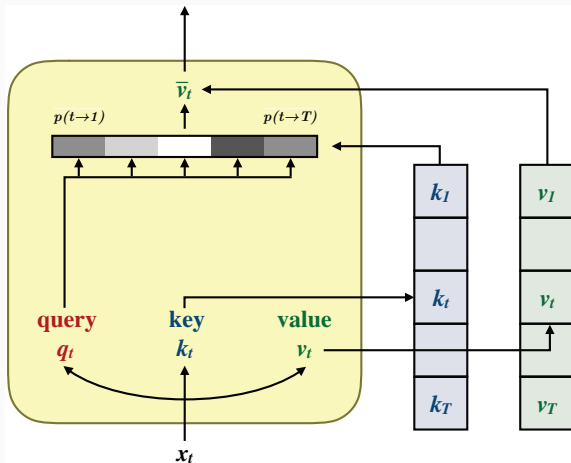
Overall Architecture



Transformer Block

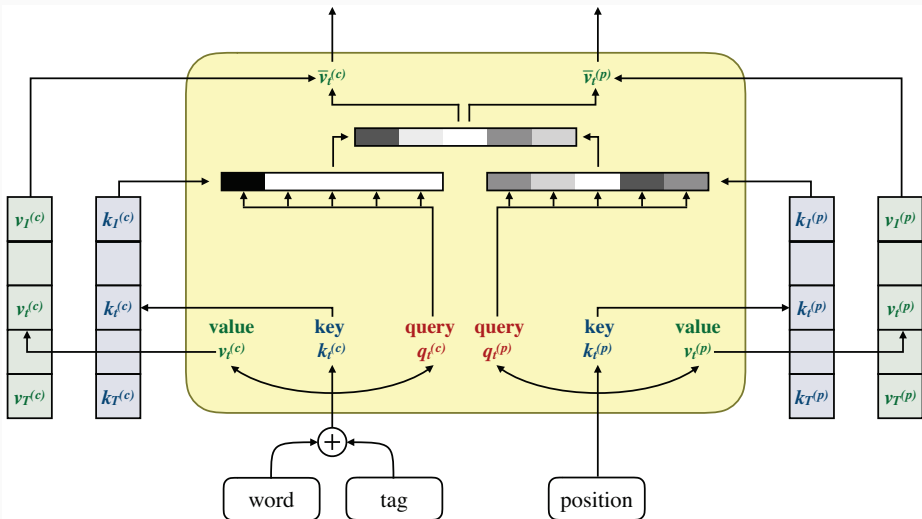


Single Attention Head



Here, $P(i \rightarrow j)$ is the probability that word i attends to word j .

Factored Attention Head



Factored attention is a commonly used design patterns for transformer models.

Span Scores

The transformer encoder give us word-based vectors (summary vectors y_k). Now we turn these into span scores:

$$s(i, j, \cdot) = M_2 \text{relu}(\text{LayerNorm}(M_1 v + c_1)) + c_2$$

where $v = [\vec{y}_j - \vec{y}_i; \tilde{y}_{j+1} - \tilde{y}_{i+1}]$ and M_1, M_2 are parameter matrices and c_1, c_2 are constants.

Note that y_k , the **summary vector** at position k , is split into two halves \vec{y}_k and \tilde{y}_k .

We then use the span scores to **decode the output**, i.e., to compute the best tree.

Results

Encoder Architecture	F1 (dev)		Δ
LSTM (Gaddy et al., 2018)	92.24		-0.43
Self-attentive (Section 2)	92.67		0.00
+ Factored (Section 3)	93.15		0.48
+ CharLSTM (Section 5.1)	93.61		0.94
+ ELMo (Section 5.2)	95.21		2.54
	LR	LP	F1
Single model, WSJ only			
Vinyals et al. (2015)	—	—	88.3
Cross and Huang (2016)	90.5	92.1	91.3
Gaddy et al. (2018)	91.76	92.41	92.08
Stern et al. (2017b)	92.57	92.56	92.56
Ours (CharLSTM)	93.20	93.90	93.55

ELMo is a pre-trained language model similar to BERT.

Summary

- We can use encoder-decoder architectures for parsing.
- For this, the output sequence has to be a linearized parse tree.
- Even a simple LSTM encoder-decoder works well, if given enough training data.
- It learns to generate well-formed trees (balanced brackets).
- We can improve this further by using a transformer-based encoder instead of an LSTM.
- For the decoder, we can use CYK over span scores to compute the optimal output sequence.

References



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