

Towards Context-Aware Syntax Parsing and Tagging

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Abstract

Information retrieval (IR) has become one of the most popular Natural Language Processing (NLP) applications. Part of speech (PoS) parsing and tagging plays an important role in IR systems. A broad range of PoS parsers and taggers tools have been proposed with the aim of helping to find a solution for the information retrieval problems, but most of these are tools based on generic NLP tags which do not capture domain-related information. In this research, we present a domain-specific parsing and tagging approach that uses not only generic PoS tags but also domain-specific PoS tags, grammatical rules, and domain knowledge. Experimental results show that our approach has a good level of accuracy when applying it to different domains.

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1 Introduction

Parts-of-speech (PoS) tags play an important role in Natural Language Processing (NLP). PoS tagging provides a large amount of information about words. PoS parsing and tagging is one of the fundamental phases in text processing. Parsing has been used as a way to identify the sentence structure by adding mark-ups which helps in organizing a sentence, while tagging represent classes and features of words, in which each word will receive a tag based upon its word class and the feature it holds.

A broad range of PoS parsing and tagging tools and approaches have been developed; most of these tools and approaches are based on natural language. Furthermore, parsers and taggers still suffer from the problem of domain adaptation [21],[13] since most of them are based just on generic NLP tags which have a limited use in domains such as search engines, question answering systems and social networks; knowing only the generic PoS tags will not assist in identifying and retrieving relevant information since a lot of knowledge related to most of these domains cannot be captured with generic PoS tags. Moreover, most parser and tagger methods do not take inconsideration the syntax and grammatical structure of the given text.



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In this paper, we propose a Domain Specific Syntax-based Parsing and Tagging (DSSPT) approach. The aim of the research presented in this paper is to evaluate the influence of using domain-specific grammatical rules categories on the the parsing and tagging process and the classification performance. In addition, we aim to evaluate the use of DSSPT on two different domains: query classification and question classification.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines previous work in parsing and tagging, including different proposed tools and approaches. Section 3 describes the proposed parsing and tagging framework. The experiments setup and results are presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper and outlines directions for future work.

2 Background

In this section we review previous work on parsing and tagging. Different methods of parsing are outlined in Section 2.1, while Section 2.2 reviews previous work on tagging methods.

2.1 Parsing

Many recent studies proposed different parsing methods and models; some of these are based on dependency parsing. Authors in [21] developed distant-supervised algorithms that use a dependency grammar for Community Question Answering (CQA). In [32] authors developed a graph-based and a transition-based dependency parser using beam-search, while in [8] a simple semi-supervised method for training dependency parsers was presented. Authors in [19] introduced MaltParser, a data-driven parser generator for dependency parsing. Some works used machine learning algorithms. Authors in [3] proposed a dependency parser using neural networks, while authors in [27] introduced algorithms to derive a query’s syntactic structure from the dependency trees. Furthermore, in [26] authors proposed a general compositional vector framework for transition based dependency parsing. Other works introduced a semantic-based parser model. Works in [9] presented a semantic parsing model for answering compositional questions. Moreover, in [30] authors presented a statistical natural language semantic parsing modeling, while in [31] authors proposed a semantic parsing framework for question answering. Authors in [24] introduced a Compositional Vector Grammar (CVG), which combines probabilistic context-free grammar (PCFGs). In [11] authors proposed an algorithm of text parsing which was demonstrated on data from Twitter, while in [25] a recursive neural network architecture was introduced. Finally, authors in [28] proposed a technique for improving parser portability.

2.2 Tagging

Most taggers and tagging approaches have been developed for general PoS tagging. Authors in [20] proposed a tag-set that consists of twelve universal PoS categories. In [1] the authors proposed a Trigrams’n’Tags (TnT) statistical PoS tagger. Moreover, work in [4] proposed a PoS tagger based on Support Vector Machines (SVMT). Other works like [29] proposed a PoS tagger using dependency network representation. In [10] authors presented a method for unsupervised PoS tagging that considers a word type. Furthermore, few taggers have been developed for specific domains. In [5] authors addressed the problem of PoS tagging for English data from Twitter. In [7] a PoS tagging method for web search queries was proposed using the sentence level morphological analysis, while in [22] a probabilistic tagging method was proposed, which avoids the problems of Markov model based taggers. Finally, authors in [12] introduced an approach for deep parsing of web search queries using a context-free multiset generating grammar.

3 Proposed Approach

3.1 Tag-set

The tag-set was developed by [18] and updated by [17]. It was mainly created for the purpose of identifying search queries by labelling each word in the query with its PoS tag and name entity to help in the classification of the users' intent. The tag-set has been tested on different search engines' queries datasets [17], [15], i.e. AOL 2006 data-set¹ and the TREC 2009 Million Query Track data-set². Furthermore, it has been used in other domains such as question classification [16] and also has been tested on different questions datasets, i.e. Yahoo Non-Factoid Question Dataset³, TREC 2007 question answering data⁴ and a Wikipedia dataset⁵ that was generated by [23].

The tag-set consists of 10,440 different words that have been labelled with PoS tags (categories) which include three levels of details from our grammar taxonomy: (1) Level 1 includes the seven major word classes in English, which are *Verb (V)*, *Noun (N)*, *Determiner (D)*, *Adjective (Adj)*, *Adverb (Adv)*, *Preposition (P)* and *Conjunction (Conj)*; (2) Level 2 consists of sub-categories of level 1 – for example, *Common Nouns (CN)*, *Proper Nouns (PN)* and *Action Verbs (AV)*; the six main question words: *How*, *Who*, *When*, *Where*, *What* and *Which* have also been added to this level; (3) Level 3 consists of all the domain-specific categories – for example, *Proper Noun Celebrity (PNC)* and *Proper Noun Geographical Areas (PNG)*. A list of all the syntactic categories and corresponding acronyms is displayed in Appendix A.

3.2 Domain-specific syntax-based parsing and tagging

We proposed a Domain-Specific Syntax-based Parsing and Tagging (DSSPT), shown in Figure 1, for the objective of assigning not just PoS tags but also domain specific ones to help in the categorization and classification of text in different domains. The aim of this approach is to create a simple parser and tagger that could easily be applied to different domains by creating domain specific grammatical rules, in which each text is transformed to a domain-specific category using these rules. The grammatical rules contain in addition to typical categories of English grammar, domain-related grammatical categories. The domain specific syntax based parsing and tagging (DSSPT) is described below.

Phase 1: Grammar: In this phase input text is analyzed using domain knowledge and term taxonomy; this is done by identifying each keywords and phrases using the proposed tag-set. Next, the grammar is generated by identifying terminal and non-terminals nodes; the grammar in this phase is based on the Context-Free Grammar (CFG) which capture and combine two different components, i.e. the sentence structure and domain knowledge.

The target in this paper is to use a simple version of the English grammar combined with domain-specific syntactic categories since most domains do not follow entirely the formal English grammar and natural language.

Creating the grammatical rules helps with the identification of ambiguous terms since two different sentences may have similar terms but different structures, each having a different

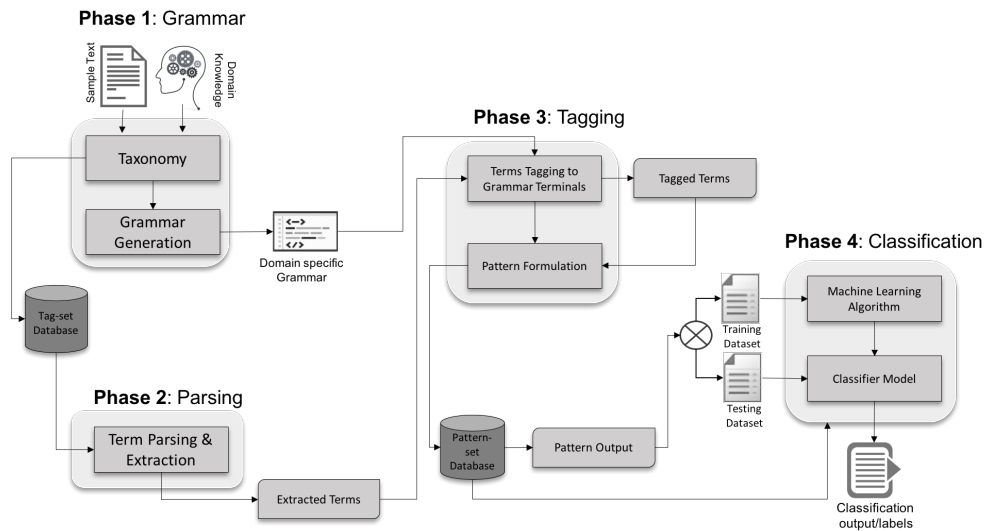
¹ http://www.researchpipeline.com/mediawiki/index.php?title=AOL_Search_Query_Logs

² <http://trec.nist.gov/data/million.query09.html>

³ <https://ciir.cs.umass.edu/downloads/nfL6/>

⁴ http://trec.nist.gov/data/qa/t2007_qadata.html

⁵ <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~ark/QA-data>



■ **Figure 1** Framework.

meaning, which may lead to different intents. For the given examples *"Order Ed Sheeran Albums"* and *"Ed Sheeran Albums Order"*, the grammatical rules will identify the structure of the sentence at three levels: (1) at phrase level, (2) at words level which includes word classes and sub-classes and (3) domain-specific level. At phrase level, *"Order Ed Sheeran Albums"* consists of *Verb Phrase* and *Noun Phrases*, while at word level, it consists of *Verb (Action Verb)* and *Nouns (Proper Noun and Common Noun)*. At the domain specific level it consists of *Action Verb - Interact (AV_I)*, *Proper Noun - Celebrity (PN_C)* and *Common Noun - Other - Plural (CN_{OP})*. On the contrary, at phrase level, *"Ed Sheeran Albums Order"* consists of *Noun Phrases*; at word level, it consists of *Nouns (Proper Noun and Common Nouns)*. At the domain-specific level it consists of *Proper Noun - Celebrity (PN_C)*, *Common Noun - Other - Plural (CN_{OP})* and *Common Noun - Other - singular (CN_{OS})*. The different syntactical structure of the two sentence leads to different syntactical patterns, which result in different meaning, intent and search results.

Phase 2: Parsing: This step is mainly responsible for extracting terms in the text to help generate the grammar structure in the next phase to facilitate the tagging of each word to the right term category. This is done by using the keywords and phrases that have been identified from the previous phase; first, compound words will be parsed and extracted, followed by single words.

Phase 3: Tagging: In this phase the text is transformed into a pattern of grammatical terms by mapping each term to its grammar terminals; each term will be mapped to its highest level of abstraction (word class, sub-class or domain-specific) and after mapping each terms the grammatical pattern is formulated. Using the domain-specific grammar that has been generated in Phase 1 (Grammar), terms will be tagged to their terminals.

Phase 4: Classification: In this phase the patterns generated in the tagging phase are used for machine learning; the aim of this phase is to build a model for automatic classification. The classification is done by following the standard process for machine learning, which involves the splitting of the dataset into a training dataset and a test dataset. The training dataset is used for building the model, and the test dataset is used to evaluate the performance of the model.

4 Experimental Study and Results

The objective of the experimental study is to investigate the ability of our proposed parsing and tagging approach to work on different domains. Two domains were used: classification of search queries and classification of questions (for question-answering systems). To assess the performance of the machine learning classifiers, the Weka⁶ software [6] was used. The experiments were set up using the typical 10-fold cross validation and the effectiveness of the classification was evaluated based on Precision, Recall and F-Measure. The results are presented in the next sub-sections for the two domains.

4.1 Queries Classification

1953 labelled queries from [14] were used, and 4,047 queries were randomly selected from AOL 2006 dataset. Queries were classified and labelled to three different categories; these categories are based on Broder's [2] classification of web queries, which are informational, navigational and transactional.

4.1.1 Results

Table 1 presents the classification performance details (Precision, Recall and F-Measure) of the Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Naive Bayes (NB) classifiers for query classification. Results show that $DSSPT_{SVM}$ identified correctly (i.e. Recall) 99.6% of the questions, while $DSSPT_{NB}$ correctly classified 95.5% of the query. $DSSPT_{SVM}$ misclassified 0.5% of transactional queries as informational, while informational and navigational queries were 100% correctly classified. Furthermore, $DSSPT_{NB}$ incorrectly classified 4.5% of the queries – 3.4% of the informational queries were classified as transactional, and 8.5% of the transactional queries were classified as informational.

■ **Table 1** Performance of the classifiers for Query Classification.

| | $DSSPT_{SVM}$ | | | $DSSPT_{NB}$ | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Accuracy | 99.6% | | | 95.5% | | |
| Precision | 0.996 | | | 0.955 | | |
| Recall | 0.996 | | | 0.955 | | |
| F-score | 0.996 | | | 0.955 | | |
| Class: | P | R | F | P | R | F |
| Info. | 0.997 | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.955 | 0.966 | 0.96 |
| Nav. | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.999 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Trans. | 0.972 | 0.955 | 0.964 | 0.935 | 0.915 | 0.925 |

4.2 Questions Classification

We used 1,160 questions that were randomly selected from Yahoo Non-Factoid Question Dataset⁷, TREC 2007 Question Answering Data⁸ and a Wikipedia dataset⁹. Questions were classified and labelled to six different categories, namely: causal, choice, confirmation (Yes-No Questions), factoid (Wh-Questions), hypothetical and list. These classifications were proposed by [16].

⁶ <http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/ml/weka/>

⁷ <https://ciir.cs.umass.edu/downloads/nfL6/>

⁸ http://trec.nist.gov/data/qa/t2007_qadata.html

⁹ <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~ark/QA-data>

4.2.1 Results

Table 2 presents the classification performance details (Precision, Recall and F-Measure) of the SVM and NB classifiers for question classification. Results show that $DSSPT_{SVM}$ identified correctly (i.e. Recall) 88.6% of the questions, while $DSSPT_{NB}$ identified correctly 83.5% of the questions.

More specifically, looking at where the errors occur, when using $DSSPT_{SVM}$, 3.2% of the causal questions were misclassified as confirmation and 32.2% were misclassified as factoid. From the choice questions, 41.7% were misclassified as confirmation and 33.3% were misclassified as factoid. Similarly, 4% of the list questions were misclassified as confirmation and 45.5% were misclassified as factoid. These results indicate that $DSSPT_{SVM}$ could not distinguish between causal, choice and list types of questions and incorrectly classified most of them as confirmation and factoid questions. Moreover, 1.6% of confirmation questions were misclassified as factoid and less than 1% were misclassified as choice or list. For the factoid questions 4.6% were misclassified as list, 1.2% were misclassified as causal, 1% were misclassified as confirmation and less than 1% were misclassified as choice. In addition, most of the hypothetical questions, i.e. 57.1%, were misclassified as factoid.

The $DSSPT_{NB}$ classifier incorrectly classified 6.5% of the causal questions as confirmation, 80.6% as factoid and 3.2% as list. Similar to $DSSPT_{SVM}$ classifier, $DSSPT_{NB}$ could not identify choice questions and misclassified 41.7% as confirmation and 58.3% as factoid. Furthermore, 0.9% of the confirmation questions were misclassified as choice, 3.4% as factoid, 2% as hypothetical and 0.9% as list. For the factoid questions, 1.3% were misclassified as causal, 0.43% as choice, 2.5% as confirmation, 0.87% as hypothetical and 2.2% as list. Moreover, 14.3% of the hypothetical questions were misclassified as causal and 57.1% as factoid. For the list type of question $DSSPT_{NB}$ incorrectly classified 7% as confirmation and 65.3% as factoid.

■ **Table 2** Performance of the classifiers for Question Classification.

| | $DSSPT_{SVM}$ | | | $DSSPT_{NB}$ | | |
|------------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Accuracy: | 88.6% | | | 83.5% | | |
| Precision: | 0.88 | | | 0.814 | | |
| Recall: | 0.886 | | | 0.835 | | |
| F-score: | 0.881 | | | 0.818 | | |
| Class: | P | R | F | P | R | F |
| Causal | 0.714 | 0.645 | 0.678 | 0.231 | 0.097 | 0.136 |
| Choice | 0.429 | 0.25 | 0.316 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Conf. | 0.948 | 0.972 | 0.96 | 0.906 | 0.928 | 0.917 |
| Factoid | 0.903 | 0.929 | 0.915 | 0.85 | 0.927 | 0.887 |
| Hypo. | 1.00 | 0.429 | 0.6 | 0.133 | 0.286 | 0.182 |
| List | 0.6 | 0.505 | 0.548 | 0.609 | 0.277 | 0.381 |

Unlike the previous approaches which focus only on the type of domain, our proposed Domain-Specific Syntax-based Parsing and Tagging (DSSPT) is a general approach for incorporating domain-specific tags, which exploits the structure of the text through using domain-specific grammatical categories and rules. Moreover, the domain-specific grammar could be easily integrated in different platforms. In addition, using syntactic categories related to different domain-specific types enable the machine learning algorithms to better differentiate between different queries/question types.

5 Conclusion and Future Work

In this paper, we proposed a domain specific syntax-based Parsing and tagging (DSSPT) approach. The grammatical rules contain in addition to typical categories of English grammar, domain-related grammatical categories. The results show that our solution led to a good performance when applying it on two different domains.

The proposed framework can be applied to other domains with similar classification problems, such as Twitter, which will be investigated in future work. In addition, we aim at examining and analyzing more datasets from different domains to enrich the tag-set which will extend the ability of our framework to be used in more domains.

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A Appendix: Grammar terms and corresponding abbreviations

| Category Name | Abbreviation | Category Name | Abbreviation |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Verbs | <i>V</i> | Action Verbs | <i>AV</i> |
| Action Verb-Interact terms | <i>AV_I</i> | Action Verb-Locate | <i>AV_L</i> |
| Action Verb- Download | <i>AV_D</i> | Auxiliary Verb | <i>AuxV</i> |
| Linking Verbs | <i>LV</i> | Adjective Free | <i>Adj_F</i> |
| Adjective Online | <i>Adj_O</i> | Adjective | <i>Adj</i> |
| Adverb | <i>Adv</i> | Determiner | <i>D</i> |
| Conjunction | <i>Conj</i> | Preposition | <i>P</i> |
| Domain Suffix | <i>DS</i> | Domain Prefix | <i>DP</i> |
| Noun | <i>N</i> | Pronoun | <i>Pron</i> |
| Numeral Numbers | <i>NN</i> | Ordinal Numbers | <i>NN_O</i> |
| Cardinal Numbers | <i>NN_C</i> | Proper Nouns | <i>PN</i> |
| Celebrities Name | <i>PN_C</i> | Entertainment | <i>PN_{Ent}</i> |
| Newspapers, Magazines, Documents, Books | <i>PN_{BDN}</i> | Events | <i>PN_E</i> |
| Companies Name | <i>PN_{CO}</i> | Geographical Areas | <i>PN_G</i> |
| Places and Buildings | <i>PN_{PB}</i> | Institutions, Associations, Clubs, Parties, Foundations and Organizations | <i>PN_{IOG}</i> |
| Brand Names | <i>PN_{BN}</i> | Software and Applications | <i>PN_{SA}</i> |
| Products | <i>PN_P</i> | History and News | <i>PN_{HN}</i> |
| Religious Terms | <i>PN_R</i> | Holidays, Days, Months | <i>PN_{HMD}</i> |
| Health Terms | <i>PN_{HLLT}</i> | Science Terms | <i>PN_S</i> |
| Common Noun | <i>CN</i> | Common Noun – Other- Singular | <i>CN_{OS}</i> |
| Common Noun- Other- Plural | <i>CN_{OP}</i> | Database and Servers | <i>CN_{DBS}</i> |
| Advice | <i>CN_A</i> | Download | <i>CN_D</i> |
| Entertainment | <i>CN_{Ent}</i> | File Type | <i>CN_{File}</i> |
| Informational Terms | <i>CN_{IFT}</i> | Obtain Offline | <i>CN_{OF}</i> |
| Obtain Online | <i>CN_{OO}</i> | History and News | <i>CN_{HN}</i> |
| Interact terms | <i>CN_I</i> | Locate | <i>CN_L</i> |
| Site, Website, URL | <i>CN_{SWU}</i> | Question Words | <i>QW</i> |
| How | <i>QW_{How}</i> | What | <i>QW_{What}</i> |
| When | <i>QW_{When}</i> | Where | <i>QW_{Where}</i> |
| Who | <i>QW_{Who}</i> | Which | <i>QW_{Which}</i> |