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The Notion of Argument in Prepositional Phrase Attachment

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Abstract Authors

In this article we refine the formulation of the problem of prepositional phrase (PP) attachment as a four-way disambiguation problem. We argue that, in interpreting PPs, both knowledge about the site of the attachment (the traditional noun-verb attachment distinction) and the nature of the attachment (the distinction of arguments from adjuncts) are needed. We introduce a method to learn arguments and adjuncts based on a definition of arguments as a vector of features. In a series of supervised classification experiments, first we explore the features that enable us to learn the

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distinction between arguments and adjuncts. We find that both linguistic diagnostics of argumenthood and lexical semantic classes are useful. Second, we investigate the best method to reach the four-way classification of potentially ambiguous prepositional phrases. We find that whereas it is overall better to solve the problem as a single four-way classification task, verb arguments are sometimes more precisely identified if the classification is done as a two-step process, first choosing the attachment site and then labeling it as argument or adjunct.

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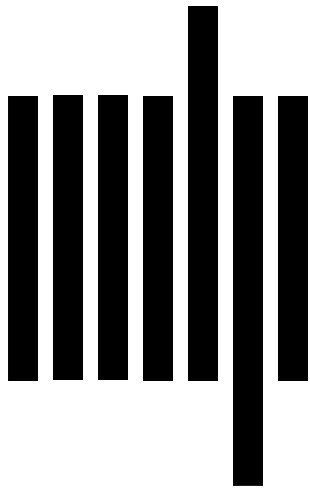
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