Annotating Temporally-Anchored Spatial Knowledge by Leveraging Syntactic Dependencies

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Abstract

This paper presents a two-step methodology to annotate temporally-anchored spatial knowledge on top of OntoNotes. We first generate potential knowledge using syntactic dependencies, and then crowdsource annotations to validate the potential knowledge. The resulting annotations indicate how long entities are or are not located somewhere, and temporally anchor this information. Crowdsourcing experiments show that spatial inferences are ubiquitous and intuitive, and experimental results show that they can be done automatically.

Keywords: Semantics, Information extraction, Spatial knowledge

1. Introduction

Extracting spatial meaning from text is of utmost importance in natural language understanding. Efforts focused on spatial meaning—both corpora development and automatic tools—have become popular. Existing approaches to extract spatial knowledge usually focus on extracting locations of events, someone or something. For example, semantic role labeling (Palmer et al., 2005) determines who did what to whom, when and where, e.g., *Thelma Gutierrez [went]_{verb} [inside the forensic laboratory where scientist are trying to solve this mystery]_{ARG4}, where ARG4 indicates the END POINT of event <i>went*. Efforts targetting locations of entities include geo-locating Twitter users (Liu and Inkpen, 2015), and pairing companies with the location of their headquarters (Mintz et al., 2009) e.g., *[IBM's]_{company} headquarters in [New York]_{location}*.

Determining the temporal span where the spatial knowledge holds is not extensively researched. From the sentence John parked Jamie's car at the Highland Garage, we can infer that John and the car are certainly located at the Highland Garage minutes before and during parking, and that John will leave shortly after parking whereas the car will be at the garage for a few days but not months. We can also infer that Jamie will probably be at the Highland Garage at some point after parking to pick up his car.

This paper presents (1) a two-step methodology to extract temporally-anchored spatial knowledge by manipulating syntactic dependencies, and a (2) crowdsourced corpus annotated with temporally-anchored spatial knowledge.

The work presented here extends our previous work (Vempala and Blanco, 2016), which only manipulated semantic roles. We show that additional temporally-anchored spatial knowledge can be extracted by leveraging syntactic dependencies. We release a new corpus that annotates how long entities are and are *not* located somewhere, and temporally anchor this spatial information.¹

2. Background

We work on top of OntoNotes (Hovy et al., 2006) as it is a well known corpus with text from various domains. Ontonotes contains over 64,000 sentences. It annotates, among other linguistic information, part-of-speech tags, parse trees, named entities and co-reference chains. We use the CoNLL- 2011 Shared Task distribution (Pradhan et al., 2011), and transform the gold parse trees into syntactic dependencies using Stanford CoreNLP (Manning et al., 2014). De Marneffe and Manning (2008) present and exemplify the Stanford dependencies, and Weischedel and Brunstein (2005) the named entity types used in OntoNotes.

We use the term *temporally-anchored spatial knowledge* to refer to information regarding whether a given x is or is not located at some location y, and for how long with respect to an event. We use the notation LOCATION(x, y) to indicate the spatial relation between x and y. We use the term potential spatial knowledge to refer to spatial relations LO-CATION(x, y) that are yet to be validated.

There are 2 types of relations LOCATION(x, y): (1) those whose arguments x and y are semantic roles of some verb, and (2) those whose arguments x and y are not semantic roles of any verb. Type (1) can be further divided into type (1a) if x and y are roles of the same verb, and type (1b) if x and y are roles of different verbs. In the sentence John called Google's office for Bill's appointment, the relation LOCATION(John, Google's office) is of type (1) and LO-CATION(Bill, Google's office) is of type (2). Also, in the example Officer Jack found the missing diamond at a warehouse owned by Mr. Walker, LOCATION(Jack, warehouse) is of type (1a) and LOCATION(Mr. Walker, warehouse) is of the type (1b). Our previous work (Vempala and Blanco, 2016) extracts spatial knowledge of type (1). In Section 3, we detail the approach that leverages syntactic dependencies to extract spatial knowledge of type (1) and (2).

3. Corpus Creation

We follow a two-step methodology to annotate temporallyanchored spatial knowledge on top of OntoNotes. First, we manipulate syntactic dependencies and named entities to generate potential spatial knowledge. Second, we gather crowdsourced annotations to either discard or validate the potential knowledge.

¹Available at https://alakanandav.bitbucket.io/



Figure 1: Sample sentence and potential spatial knowledge generated using syntactic dependencies.

3.1. Generating Potential Additional Spatial Knowledge

We enforce the restrictions below to generate potential spatial relations LOCATION(x, y):

1. *y* is a GPE or LOC named entity;

- x is a PERSON, FAC, PRODUCT or WORK_OF_ART named entity from the same sentence than y;
- 3. *y* is reachable from y_{verb}, where y_{verb} is the closest verb going up the dependency tree from *y*; and
- 4. y_{verb} is not the verb to be or to have.

We defined Restrictions 1–2 because we are interested in locations of named entities and assigning spatial information to other entities (e.g., DATE) is nonsensical. Restriction 3 reduces the annotation effort. Restriction 4, however, was designed after pilot annotations revealed that no temporally-anchored spatial knowledge could be inferred from them.

OntoNotes annotates 19,478 GPEs and 1,858 LOCs (potential ys); and 18,823 PERSONs, 1,080 FACs, 734 PROD-UCTs, and 1,253 WORK_OF_ARTs (potential xs). Pairing all potential xs and ys within a sentence results in 10,136 pairs (Restrictions 1–2). Enforcing Restriction 3 reduces the number of pairs to 9,351, and enforcing Restriction 4 further reduces the number to 8,775. Out of these 8,775 pairs, 7,029 have a PERSON as x, 951 a FAC, 411 a PROD-UCT, and 384 a WORK_OF_ART.

Figure 1 presents sample sentence and potential spatial relations generated using dependencies.

3.2. Crowdsourcing Annotations

After generating potential spatial knowledge, it must be validated manually. To do so, we crowdsourced annotations using CrowdFlower and asking questions in plain English. More specifically, for each potential pair (x, y), annotators were asked "After reading the sentence above, is x located at y before / during / after y_{verb} ?" The annotation interface showed the original sentence with x and y highlighted, and no further information. Annotators were instructed to answer questions based on the sentence provided, and to not use prior knowledge about x or y.

After pilot annotations, it became clear that answering the above question with yes or no is suboptimal. First, the question is sometimes nonsensical because (a) x cannot be literally located anywhere, or (b) y_{verb} is a state, thus the meaning of before / during / after y_{verb} is unclear.

Second, sometimes there is not enough information in the sentence to unambiguously determine whether x is or is not

located at y with respect to y_{verb} . Recall that potential pairs are generated automatically, so some will inevitably be spurious. The final interface forces annotators to choose from one of the following coarse-grained labels for each temporal anchor (before / during / after y_{verb}):

- yes or no if x is (or is *not*) located at y before / during / after y_{verb};
- inv if asking the question for x is nonsensical; and
- unk if the question is intelligible but the answer is unknown, i.e., neither yes nor no.

Additionally, if the coarse-grained label is yes, annotators had to choose a fine-grained label:

- Before and after: secs, mins, days, weeks, months, years, or inf for infinite. They were instructed to choose the longest unit of time possible (e.g., days means for a few days but less than a week).
- During: entire if x is located at y for the entire duration of y_{verb}, some otherwise.

Out of the 8,775 (x, y) pairs automatically generated, we collected three annotations for 25% of pairs per y_{verb} (total: 1,689). Among these relations, 478 belong to type (1) (a: 227, b: 251) and 1,211 belong to type (2) i.e., x and y belong to the same semantic role or are not the heads of any semantic role.

4. Corpus Analysis

Figure 2 shows percentages of coarse-grained labels per temporal anchor (before, during, after and all). Overall (bottom right sub figure), only 3.20% questions are invalid, and annotators answered with yes or no 74.28% of guestions (yes: 51.77%, no: 22.51%), i.e., almost 75% of potential spatial knowledge is deemed correct by annotators. Percentages per named entity type of x follow similar trends overall, but WORK_OF_ART has more inv labels (18.05%) than the rest (0.85%-2.87%), and PRODUCT has more yes labels than the rest (62.65% vs. 45.83%-53.23%). The percentages per temporal anchor indicate that more temporally-anchored spatial knowledge can be extracted for *before* than *after* (52.87% + 28.89% = 81.76% vs. 52.34 + 22.68% = 75.02%). Also, more potential spatial knowledge can be extracted for *during* than before and after (63.47% + 21.79% = 85.26%).

Percentages for fine-grained labels are shown in Table 1. For *during*, the vast majority of labels (91.22%) are entire, and only 8.77% are some. For *before* and *after*, most labels are either years (49.28% and 36.72%) or inf (34.42% and 45.19%). Other labels (secs, mins, ..., months) are uncommon (1.10%–10.55%). Because of the unbalanced distribution, we experiment with clustered fine-grained labels <years and >years.



Figure 2: Percentages of coarse-grained labels per temporal anchor (top left: before, top right: during, bottom left: after, and bottom right: all). Percentages are divided by the named entity type of x.

	some	entire	secs	mins	hours	days	weeks	months	years	inf
Before	n/a	n/a	2.48	1.83	6.39	2.09	2.09	1.43	49.28	34.42
During	8.77	91.22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
After	n/a	n/a	1.30	2.34	10.55	2.73	1.69	2.47	36.72	42.19
All	3.65	37.94	1.10	1.22	4.95	1.41	1.10	1.13	25.11	22.37

Table 1: Percentage of fine-grained labels for instances annotated with coarse-grained label yes.

	r	% instances such that								
		3/3	2/3	0/3						
Before	0.62	31.20	56.42	12.37						
During	0.63	36.64	51.56	11.78						
After	0.59	26.34	60.86	12.78						
All	0.59	31.39	56.28	12.31						

Table 2: Annotation quality for coarse-grained labels. We show weighted Pearson correlations(r) between annotators and the majority label, and percentage of pairs (x, y) for which 3, 2 and none of the annotators agree (out of 3).

	r	% instances such that									
	'	3/3	2/3	0/3	2/2	0/2					
Before	0.62	39.43	46.69	13.88	88.53	11.47					
During	0.60	38.57	48.62	12.81	84.94	15.06					
After	0.58	29.67	54.64	15.68	87.78	12.22					
All	0.62	36.19	49.8	14.01	87.04	12.96					

4.1. Annotation Quality

A majority coarse-grained label exists in over 87% of pairs (Table 2, 3/3 or 2/3 agreed). We calculated weighted Pearson correlation between annotators and the majority label following this mapping: yes:1, no:-1, unk and inv:0; correlations range between 0.59 and 0.62. Fleiss Kappa agreements (not shown in Table 2) range between 0.51 and 0.55, which are considered moderate (Landis and Koch, 1977). We believe Pearson is better suited than Kappa, as not all disagreement are equally bad (e.g., yes vs. no and unk vs. inv).

Table 3: Annotation quality for fine-grained labels. We show weighted Pearson correlations(r) between annotators and the majority label and percentages of pairs (x, y) for which annotators agree. We divide the percentages into pairs in which 3 or 2 annotators agreed on the coarse-grained label *yes* (3/3, 2/3 or 0/3; and 2/2 or 0/2).

Table 3 presents a similar analysis for fine-grained labels. A majority label exists in 86% of pairs when 3/3 annotators agreed on the coarse-grained label yes, and 87.04% when 2/3 annotators agreed. Pearson correlations range from 0.58 to 0.60, and overall Kappa is 0.56 (not shown).

4.2. Annotation Examples

In table 4, we present real examples from the annotated corpus. In Sentence 1, the annotators chose the label years

Sentence	Bet	fore	Dui	ring	Af	ter				
Schence	С	F	C	F	С	F				
Sentence 1: $[A {US}^{GPE} poll]_{ARG_0} [shows]_{verb} [President {C}]$						Lady				
{Hillary Rodham Clinton} ^{PERSON} are the man and woman most admired by {Americans} ^{NORP}] _{ARG1} .										
x: Hillary Rodham Clinton, y: US, y _{verb} : shows	yes	years	yes	entire	yes	years				
x: President Clinton, y: US, y _{verb} : shows	yes	years	yes	entire	yes	years				
Sentence 2: $[{Venezuela}^{GPE's} leftist President]_{ARG_0}$ has $[awarded]_{verb} [{Fidel Castro}^{PERSON}]_{ARG_2}$ [the key										
the city of $\{Caracas\}^{GPE}_{ARG_1}$.										
x: Fidel Castro, y: Caracas, y _{verb} : awarded	yes	days	yes	entire	yes	days				
x: Fidel Castro, y: Venezuela, y_{verb} : awarded	no	n/a	no	n/a	no	n/a				
Sentence 3: On {Capitol Hill} ^{LOC} {today} ^{DATE} , senators we										
"USS Cole" $WORK_OF_ART$ $_{ARG_1}$ [into the port of $Aden$ GPE in	{Yemen}	$G^{\text{GPE}}_{\text{ARG}_2}$, why he	made th	at decisi	on.				
x: "USS Cole", y: Yemen, y_{verb} : sent	no	n/a	no	n/a	yes	weeks				
x: "USS Cole", y: Aden, y _{verb} : sent	no	n/a	no	n/a	yes	weeks				
x: "USS Cole", y: Capitol Hill, y _{verb} : asking	no	n/a	no	n/a	no	n/a				
Sentence 4: $[{\text{Yesterday}}^{\text{DATE}}]_{\text{ARGM-TMP}}, [{\text{Afghanistan}}^{\text{GPL}}]$		g {Talib	$an\}^{ORG}]_A$	ARG ₀ [den	nied] _{verb}	[{Bin				
Laden's PERSON involvement in the $\{Yemeni\}^{NORP}$ attack $]_{ARG_1}$	•									
x: Bin Laden, y: Afghanistan, y_{verb} : denied	unk	n/a	unk	n/a	unk	n/a				

Table 4: Annotation examples for the generated pairs. We show coarse- and fine-grained annotations (C and F respectively); y_{verb} denotes the first verb going up the dependency tree from y, curly brackets and superindices indicate named entities, and square brackets and subindices indicate semantic roles of y_{verb}

for before, after and entire for during because Hillary Rodham Clinton (x in pair 1) and President Clinton (x in pair 2) will be located in US (y) with respect to the y_{verb} shows for all the three temporal anchors. The label years can also be justified because the sentence states that Hillary Rodham Clinton is the wife of US President Clinton. Also, this is a type 2 spatial relation since x and y are not semantic roles of any verb.

From Sentence 2, we can say that Fidel Castro (x) is located in the Caracas city at least for a few days before, after and for the entire time during y_{verb} awarded took place. Also, the annotators correctly interpreted that Fidel Castro is not located in Venezuela before, during and after awarded took place.

From Sentence 3, the annotators could infer that the USS Cole (x) is not located in Yemen (y in pair 1) or Aden (y in pair 2) before and during y_{verb} sent took place. They also inferred that it will be located in Yemen and Aden at least for a few weeks after sent took place. Also, it can be justified that USS Cole is not present in Capitol Hill before, during and after y_{verb} asking took place.

In Sentence 4, we cannot say anything about the location of Bin Laden(x) from the sentence, so the annotators choose the label unk for all the three temporal anchors.

5. Experiments

In this section, we present learning experiments with the corpus. Each LOCATION(x, y) relation has three labels corresponding to temporal anchors before, during and after, thus we generate 3 instances per relation. We perform two classification tasks: (1) coarse-grained classification to predict yes, no or unk, and (2) clustered fine-grained classification to predict \geq years, <years, no or unk. This classification is inspired by the previous work by Pan et al. (2006) who predict event durations.

We discard all the instances with inv label. We found it advantageous to train one classifier per temporal tag. We divide the instances into 80% train and 20% test by ensuring all the LOCATION(x, y) relations generated from a particular sentence belong to either the train or test sets. We use scikit-learn (Pedregosa et al., 2011) to train one SVM per temporal anchor and tune the C and γ parameters using 10-fold cross-validation and grid search over the train set. Results are reported on the corresponding test set.

Table 5 lists the feature set we experiment with. *Basic* features encode basic information regarding argument x, location y, x_verb and y_verb . NE features categorize the argument x and location y based on their named entity types. Syntax features capture dependency structure of x and y. Semantic features add information regarding spatial and temporal roles.

6. Results

We performed experiments using gold-standard linguistic annotations as well as predicted linguistic annotations. The gold POS tags, parse-trees, semantic roles, dependencies and named entities are taken from the CoNLL release and the predicted linguistic information is obtained using SyntaxNet (Andor et al., 2016). The baseline systems predict the most frequent label per temporal anchor and obtain an overall F-score of 0.46 (0.29 for before, 0.49 for during and 0.29 for after).

Results with coarse-grained and clustered fine-grained labels obtained with all features per temporal anchor using gold standard linguistic information are presented in Table 6. Models trained with all features perform best with respect to all temporal anchors. In general, results with before and during are better than results with after.

Results with coarse-grained and clustered fine-grained labels obtained with all features per temporal anchor using predicted linguistic information is presented in Table 7. The

Туре	Feature	Description
	1	whether <i>x</i> occurs <i>before</i> or <i>after y</i>
	2	number of tokens between x and y
	3–4	number of tokens in x and y
Basic	5–8	words and POS tags of the heads of x and y
	9–16	words and POS tags of the first and last tokens in x and y
	17–24	words and POS tags of the previous and next tokens to x and y
	25-26	word and POS tag of the closest verb to y going up the dependency tree
NE	27–28	named entity types of x and y
	29-30	outgoing dependencies from heads of x and y
Syntax	31–34	outgoing dependencies from first and last tokens of x and y
	35–38	outgoing dependencies from previous and next tokens to x and
Semantic	39–40	counts of ARGM-LOC and ARGM-TMP roles in the sentence

Table 5: Feature set to determine whether x is (or is not) located at y, and for how long.

		Before			During			After			Overall		
		Р	R	F	Р	R	F	Р	R	F	Р	R	F
Coarse-grained	Yes	0.62	0.71	0.66	0.66	0.84	0.74	0.58	0.63	0.61	0.62	0.73	0.67
	No	0.55	0.52	0.54	0.33	0.21	0.26	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.40	0.42
	Unk	0.32	0.23	0.27	0.35	0.12	0.18	0.38	0.32	0.35	0.35	0.22	0.27
	Avg	0.54	0.56	0.55	0.54	0.60	0.56	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.53	0.56	0.54
	≥years	0.56	0.64	0.60	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.60	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.61	0.59
	<years< td=""><td>0.44</td><td>0.15</td><td>0.22</td><td>n/a</td><td>n/a</td><td>n/a</td><td>0.33</td><td>0.12</td><td>0.18</td><td>0.39</td><td>0.14</td><td>0.20</td></years<>	0.44	0.15	0.22	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.33	0.12	0.18	0.39	0.14	0.20
	entire	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.67	0.82	0.74	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.67	0.82	0.74
Clustered fine-grained	some	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00
	No	0.55	0.60	0.58	0.30	0.28	0.29	0.48	0.66	0.55	0.44	0.51	0.47
	Unk	0.33	0.28	0.31	0.31	0.10	0.16	0.44	0.40	0.42	0.36	0.26	0.30
	Avg.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.51	0.57	0.52	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.51

Table 6: Precision recall and F1-score with coarse-grained labels and clustered fine-grained labels using features extracted from gold standard linguistic annotations for the best system per temporal anchor

			Before			During			After			Overall		
		Р	R	F	Р	R	F	Р	R	F	Р	R	F	
	Yes	0.57	0.83	0.67	0.67	0.88	0.76	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.60	0.76	0.66	
Coorse grained	No	0.52	0.44	0.47	0.32	0.17	0.22	0.41	0.45	0.43	0.42	0.35	0.37	
Coarse-grained	Unk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.08	0.14	0.24	0.21	0.23	0.30	0.10	0.12	
	Avg.	0.45	0.55	0.49	0.58	0.62	0.56	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.49	0.54	0.50	
	≥years	0.57	0.57	0.57	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.60	0.39	0.47	0.59	0.48	0.52	
	<years< td=""><td>0.43</td><td>0.18</td><td>0.25</td><td>n/a</td><td>n/a</td><td>n/a</td><td>0.25</td><td>0.17</td><td>0.20</td><td>0.34</td><td>0.18</td><td>0.23</td></years<>	0.43	0.18	0.25	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.25	0.17	0.20	0.34	0.18	0.23	
	entire	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.64	0.88	0.74	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.67	0.82	0.74	
Clustered fine-grained	some	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	No	0.52	0.61	0.56	0.33	0.17	0.22	0.40	0.62	0.49	0.42	0.47	0.42	
	Unk	0.24	0.22	0.23	0.38	0.12	0.18	0.32	0.36	0.34	0.31	0.23	0.25	
	Avg.	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.51	0.59	0.52	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.53	0.50	

Table 7: Precision recall and F1-score values for best systems with coarse-grained labels and clustered fine-grained labels using features extracted from predicted linguistic annotations.

coarse-grained and clustered fine-grained results with models trained using predicted linguistic information obtained an overall F1-score of 0.50 (vs. 0.54 and 0.51) with a test set of 655 (vs. 1076, 60% overlap with gold test set). When semantic roles are used extract potential spatial knowledge (Vempala and Blanco, 2016) the overlap between predicted and gold test set is only 30%.

7. Conclusions

We have presented an approach to determine whether selected named entities are located or *not* located somewhere, and specify *when* with respect to an event. Crowdsourcing experiments show that annotating this kind of temporallyanchored spatial knowledge can be done by non-experts. Most of the pairs (74.28%, Figure 2) automatically generated are validated by annotators (coarse-grained labels yes and no). Importantly, working with named entities and syntactic dependencies instead of semantic roles allows us to generate more potential spatial knowledge and obtain better results in a realistic scenario, i.e., with predicted linguistic annotations.

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