

Universal Dependencies are hard to parse – or are they?

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Motivation

Universal Dependencies (UD) provide the means for

- a cross-linguistically consistent dependency annotation
- good for multilingual applications

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But ...

- not optimised for monolingual dependency parsing
 - ▶ parsers prefer function-head encodings / chain-like representations
 - lower parsing accuracies for UD-style encoding
- What causes the decrease in parsing accuracy?
- Is it equally strong for typologically different languages?

Related work

- Schwartz et al. (2012), Popel et al. (2013), Maraček et al (2013), Versley & Kirilin (2015), Rosa (2015), de Lhoneux & Nivre (2016), ...

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- Silveira and Manning (2015)
 - ▶ convert English content-head to function-head representations
 - improved acc. for function-head representation of PPs and copula
 - ▶ back-conversion of parser output propagates errors

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- Silveira and Manning (2015)
 - ▶ convert English content-head to function-head representations
 - improved acc. for function-head representation of PPs and copula
 - ▶ back-conversion of parser output propagates errors
- Kohita et al. (2017)
 - ▶ convert 3 design decisions in UD (*case, dep, mark*) to function-head
 - ▶ conversion improves results of *back-converted* parser output for 16 out of 19 languages

Open questions

- Impact of parsing model/feature templates
 - ▶ do different parsing paradigms favour specific annotation schemes?
 - ▶ are feature templates biased towards one particular representation?
- Typological properties
 - ▶ same trend for typologically different languages?

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Method:

- Train and evaluate different parsing models on original UD and on converted treebanks for 15 languages
- Conversion of preposition, copula and coordination handling

Data

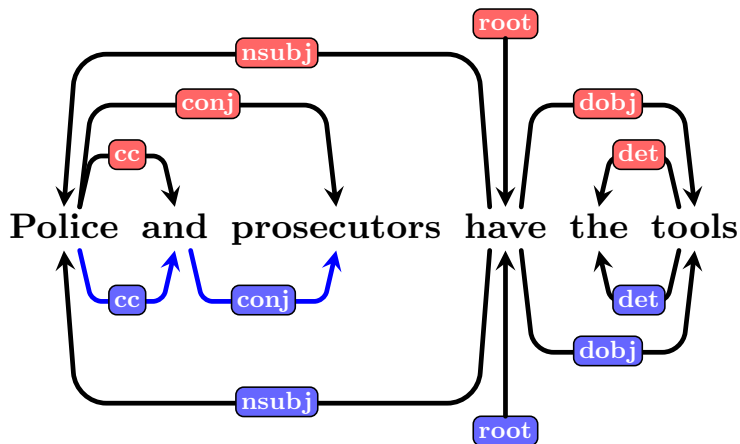
- 15 languages from the UD project (v1.3)
 - ▶ treebank sizes between 3,900 and 68,500 trees
 - ▶ treebanks that have undergone some manual quality check

<i>germanic</i>	<i>iranian</i>	<i>romance</i>	<i>slavic</i>	<i>sinitic</i>	<i>finnic</i>	<i>turkic</i>
English	Farsi	Catalan	Bulgarian	Chinese	Estonian	Turkish
German		Spanish	Czech			
		French	Hungarian			
		Italian	Russian			
		Romanian				

Conversions

Coordination

UD encoding

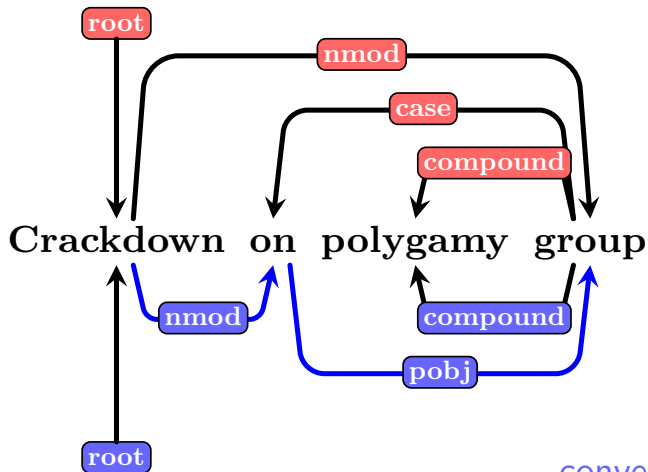


converted tree

Conversions

Preposition

UD encoding

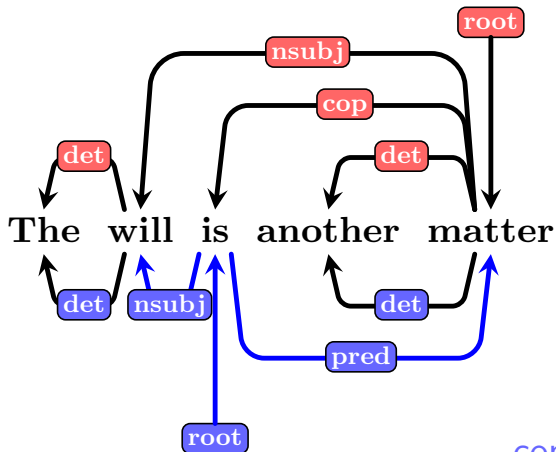


converted tree

Conversions

Copula

UD encoding



converted tree

Conversions

Evaluation

- Original UD treebanks
 - ▶ train parser on gold UD trees
 - ▶ evaluate UD parser output against original UD trees

- Converted treebanks
 - ▶ train parser on converted UD trees
 - ▶ evaluate parser output against converted gold trees
 - avoid errors introduced by back-conversion of parser output

Information preservation after back-and-forth conversion on gold trees

		% affected	size	LAS				UAS
				cop	prep	coord	c-p-c	c-p-c
<i>Chinese</i>	zh	20.9	3,997	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0
<i>Estonian</i>	et	23.6	14,510	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0
<i>Turkish</i>	tr	27.9	3,948	99.9	99.8	99.8	99.4	99.8
<i>Russian</i>	ru	30.6	48,171	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>German</i>	de	33.2	14,118	99.8	100.0	99.8	99.6	100.0
<i>Czech</i>	cs	35.3	68,495	100.0	100.0	99.7	99.7	100.0
<i>Romanian</i>	ro	36.4	7,141	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.7	100.0
<i>English</i>	en	37.6	12,543	100.0	99.8	99.9	99.6	99.9
<i>Croatian</i>	hr	38.5	5,792	100.0	100.0	99.8	99.8	100.0
<i>French</i>	fr	38.5	14,554	100.0	99.8	99.9	99.8	99.9
<i>Catalan</i>	ca	38.8	13,123	99.9	99.5	99.9	99.4	99.8
<i>Italian</i>	it	40.3	12,837	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0
<i>Spanish</i>	es	40.3	14,187	99.8	99.9	99.9	99.6	99.9
<i>Bulgarian</i>	bg	43.7	8,907	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0
<i>Farsi</i>	fa	45.7	4,798	99.6	100.0	98.8	98.4	100.0
<i>avg.</i>		35.4	16,475	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.6	99.9

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Kohita et al. 2017: 2.3 - 15.6%

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Experimental setup

- Three different non-projective parsers

RBG parser	[Lei et al. 2014]	<i>graph-based, 3rd-order features</i>
IMSTrans	[Björkelund & Nivre 2015]	<i>transition-based, standard features</i>
DENSE parser	[Zhang et al. 2017]	<i>bi-LSTM-based, no feature templates</i>

- Evaluation measures

- ▶ Labelled Attachment Score (LAS)
- ▶ Content dependencies only (CNC) [Nivre & Fang 2017]

Baselines

Parsing scores for UD encodings (no conversion)

		CNC		
		IMS	RBG	DENSE
<i>germanic</i>	de	79.7	78.9	77.1
	en	82.8	82.2	82.3
<i>iranian</i>	fa	80.5	79.5	80.8
<i>romance</i>	ca	84.0	82.7	83.6
	es	78.6	77.5	78.0
	fr	79.4	77.6	78.6
	it	84.3	82.9	83.9
	ro	75.4	74.6	73.3
<i>slavic</i>	bg	83.7	80.8	81.7
	cs	86.1	83.9	83.5
	hr	77.2	77.6	74.9
	ru	88.0	87.8	84.4
<i>sinitic</i>	zh	80.6	77.9	79.1
<i>finnic</i>	et	83.0	82.6	73.0
<i>turkic</i>	tr	71.9	73.4	59.1

Results for converted treebanks

	lang	IMS		RBG		DENSE	
		CNC	Δ	CNC	Δ	CNC	Δ
<i>ger</i>	de	81.0		81.2		78.0	
	en	83.6		83.4		83.6	
<i>ira</i>	fa	84.2		83.4		83.6	
<i>rom</i>	ca	85.6		85.0		84.9	
	es	80.5		80.8		79.9	
	fr	81.9		80.7		80.4	
	it	86.1		86.1		85.5	
	ro	75.7		75.3		73.6	
<i>sla</i>	bg	85.4		83.8		83.8	
	cs	87.3		85.2		84.2	
	hr	77.4		77.3		73.2	
	ru	89.2		88.7		82.1	
<i>sin</i>	zh	81.9		78.9		79.2	
<i>fin</i>	et	84.4		82.8		74.7	
<i>tur</i>	tr	71.6		71.8		58.3	

CNC and differences (Δ) to CNC obtained on original UD treebanks

Results for converted treebanks

	lang	IMS		RBG		DENSE	
		CNC	Δ	CNC	Δ	CNC	Δ
<i>ger</i>	de	81.0	1.3	81.2	2.3	78.0	0.9
	en	83.6	0.8	83.4	1.2	83.6	1.3
<i>ira</i>	fa	84.2	3.7	83.4	3.9	83.6	2.8
<i>rom</i>	ca	85.6	1.6	85.0	2.3	84.9	1.3
	es	80.5	1.9	80.8	3.3	79.9	1.9
	fr	81.9	2.5	80.7	3.1	80.4	1.8
	it	86.1	1.8	86.1	3.2	85.5	1.6
	ro	75.7	0.3	75.3	0.7	73.6	0.3
<i>sla</i>	bg	85.4	1.7	83.8	3.0	83.8	2.1
	cs	87.3	1.2	85.2	1.3	84.2	0.7
	hr	77.4	0.2	77.3	-0.3	73.2	-1.7
	ru	89.2	1.2	88.7	0.9	82.1	-2.3
<i>sin</i>	zh	81.9	1.3	78.9	1.0	79.2	0.1
<i>fin</i>	et	84.4	1.4	82.8	0.2	74.7	1.7
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	en	83.6	0.8	83.4	1.2	83.6	1.3
<i>ira</i>	fa	84.2	3.7	83.4	3.9	83.6	2.8
<i>rom</i>	ca	85.6	1.6	85.0	2.3	84.9	1.3
	es	80.5	1.9	80.8	3.3	79.9	1.9
	fr	81.9	2.5	80.7	3.1	80.4	1.8
	it	86.1	1.8	86.1	3.2	85.5	1.6
	ro	75.7	0.3	75.3	0.7	73.6	0.3
<i>sla</i>	bg	85.4	1.7	83.8	3.0	83.8	2.1
	cs	87.3	1.2	85.2	1.3	84.2	0.7
	hr	77.4	0.2	77.3	-0.3	73.2	-1.7
	ru	89.2	1.2	88.7	0.9	82.1	-2.3
<i>sin</i>	zh	81.9	1.3	78.9	1.0	79.2	0.1
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<i>tur</i>	tr	71.6	-0.3	71.8	-1.6	58.3	-0.8

No feature template bias!

What determines ...

whether and how much a specific language will benefit from a particular choice of encoding?

- amount of non-projectivity
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- ambiguity caused by case syncretism
- word order properties
 - ▶ dependency length
 - ▶ ambiguity in head direction

[Gulordava & Merlo 2016]

Impact on parsing accuracies using *artificial* treebanks

Gulordava & Merlo 2016

- We adopt their measures to find out more about the **impact of annotation schemes** on parsing
 - ▶ Compute overall ratio of dependency length minimisation (DLM) in the converted treebanks (*variation in dependency length*)
 - ▶ Compute arc direction entropy (ADE) (*variation in linear order*)

Dependency length minimisation (DLM ratio)

$$DLM \text{ ratio} = \sum_s \frac{DL_s}{|s|^2} / \sum_s \frac{ModDL_s}{|s|^2} \quad (1)$$

- DL : sum of length of all arcs in the tree for sentence s
- DLM ratio > 1 : conversion resulted in a decrease in DL

DLM ratio for individual conversions

	Lang	DL (orig)	DLM (conv)
<i>ger</i>	de	3.4	1.03
	en	2.9	1.07
<i>ira</i>	fa	3.5	0.97
<i>rom</i>	ca	3.1	1.09
	es	2.8	1.11
	fr	2.8	1.09
	it	2.7	1.08
	ro	2.7	1.07
<i>sla</i>	bg	2.5	1.08
	cs	2.8	1.06
	hr	2.8	1.08
	ru	2.7	1.05
<i>sin</i>	zh	3.6	1.00
<i>fin</i>	et	2.6	1.02
<i>tur</i>	tr	2.6	1.02

Table: Avg. DL in the original treebank and DLM ratio for converted trees

Impact of dependency length minimisation on parsing

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Linear Regression

- fit linear regression model to the data
- no significant correlation between DL and changes in CNC
(IMSTrans: $p = 0.604$, RBG: $p = 0.463$, DENSE: $p = 0.943$)

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Improvements in parsing accuracies not due to shorter dependencies!

Arc direction entropy (ADE)

- Impact of variation in linear ordering of head and dependent on parsing accuracy?
 - ▶ Typological differences between languages: head-initial vs. head-final (Liu 2010)
 - ▶ Annotation schemes also impact head direction

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- We compute ADE, following Gulordava & Merlo 2016: calculate overall arc direction entropy in a treebank conditioned on relation type Rel and POS for head H and dependent D

$$H(Dir|Rel, H, D) = \sum_{rel,h,d} p(rel, h, d) H(Dir|rel, h, d) \quad (2)$$

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$$H(Dir|Rel, H, D) = \sum_{rel,h,d} p(rel, h, d) H(Dir|rel, h, d) \quad (2)$$

- Increase in ADE: converted treebank introduced more variation with respect to linear order of head and dependent

Arc direction entropy (ADE)

Methodological issues

Entropy is sensitive to sample size (Futrell et al. 2015)

We measure variation in arc direction over n equally-sized random samples from each treebank (with replacement, $n = 1000$), and report the average over all samples.

ADE for converted treebanks

	lang	Δ cop-prep-coord
<i>ger</i>	de	-0.23
	en	-0.72
<i>ira</i>	fa	-0.60
<i>rom</i>	ca	0.16
	es	-0.36
	fr	-0.27
	it	-0.29
	ro	0.09
<i>sla</i>	bg	-0.34
	cs	0.03
	hr	0.41
	ru	0.41
<i>sin</i>	zh	-0.19
<i>fin</i>	et	-0.16
<i>tur</i>	tr	0.50

Difference (Δ) between avg. unlexicalised arc direction entropy (ADE) in the original treebank and in the modified treebanks

Impact of arc direction entropy on parsing

- Treebank conversion:
 - ▶ for most languages conversion decreases ADE
 - ▶ slight increase for Czech, Romanian, Catalan
 - ▶ substantial increase for Croatian, Russian, Turkish

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Linear Regression

→ significant correlation between ADE and changes in CNC

(IMSTrans: $p = 0.01$, RBG: $p = 0.04$, DENSE: $p = 0.0002$)

Summary & Discussion

- UD-style encoding results in longer dependencies and higher arc direction entropy for many languages
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- No significant correlation between parsing accuracy (RBG) and head word vocabulary entropy

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- Our findings suggest that not the increase in dependency length but the *increase in arc direction entropy* causes lower scores for UD
- Kohita et al. (2017) discuss *head word vocabulary entropy* as potential reason for higher error rate for UD annotations
- No significant correlation between parsing accuracy (RBG) and head word vocabulary entropy
- Results suggest an interaction between typological properties and effect strength of improvements obtained through treebank conversion

Thanks for listening!

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Backup slides

Baselines

Parsing scores for UD encodings (no conversion)

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	en	86.4	86.3	86.0	82.8	82.2	82.3
<i>iranian</i>	fa	83.4	83.1	83.9	80.5	79.5	80.8
<i>romance</i>	ca	89.5	88.8	89.1	84.0	82.7	83.6
	es	85.6	85.2	85.2	78.6	77.5	78.0
	fr	85.6	84.4	85.2	79.4	77.6	78.6
	it	89.6	88.8	89.3	84.3	82.9	83.9
	ro	79.9	79.6	78.6	75.4	74.6	73.3
<i>slavic</i>	bg	86.9	84.9	85.6	83.7	80.8	81.7
	cs	87.8	86.1	85.7	86.1	83.9	83.5
	hr	79.9	80.7	78.1	77.2	77.6	74.9
	ru	89.5	89.5	86.8	88.0	87.8	84.4
<i>sinitic</i>	zh	81.8	79.4	80.4	80.6	77.9	79.1
<i>finnic</i>	et	84.1	83.9	75.3	83.0	82.6	73.0
<i>turkic</i>	tr	73.5	75.1	62.5	71.9	73.4	59.1

Turkish and Croatian: a closer look

<i>metric</i>	orig	cop	prep	coord	c-p-c	Δ
<i>Turkish</i>						
<i>CNC</i>	73.4	72.9	72.6	71.9	71.8	-1.6
<i>core</i>	65.9	65.3	65.9	64.7	67.1	+1.2
<i>non-core</i>	75.5	74.9	74.4	73.9	73.2	-2.3
<i>func</i>	85.6	84.2	83.4	88.2	86.0	+0.4
<i>Croatian</i>						
<i>CNC</i>	77.7	75.5	76.9	78.6	77.3	-0.4
<i>core</i>	81.1	81.5	81.0	81.7	81.9	+0.7
<i>non-core</i>	76.8	74.0	75.9	77.8	76.1	-0.9
<i>func</i>	88.5	87.9	87.9	89.1	88.7	+0.2

Results for different label sets for Turkish and Croatian (RBG parser) and difference (Δ) between original and converted treebank (**cop-prep-coord**).

Turkish and Croatian: a closer look

Turkish

- Increase for core arguments: csubj, ccomp
- Decrease for non-core arguments: coordination
- Low size of Turkish treebank, more quality control needed?
Results might not be representative...

Croatian

- Chain-like encoding of coordinations improves results for all GFs
- keep UD annotations, only change encoding of coordinations:
77.7% → 78.6% CNC

Inconsistencies in Turkish annotation of coordinations

1	Ekonomik	ekonomik	ADJ	...	3	conj
2	ve	ve	CONJ	...	3	conj
3	Sosyal	sosyal	ADJ	...	4	amod
4	Konsey'e	Konsey	PROPN	...	6	nmod
5	işlerlik	işlerlik	NOUN	...	6	dobj
6	kazandırılınsın	kazan	VERB	...	0	root
7	..	PUNCT	Punc	...	6	punct

DLM ratio for individual conversions

	Lang	orig DL	cop	prep	coord	c-p-c	Δ (IMS)
<i>ger</i>	de	3.4	0.98	1.01	1.03	1.03	1.3
	en	2.9	1.00	1.04	1.03	1.07	0.8
<i>ira</i>	fa	3.5	0.97	0.99	1.02	0.97	3.7
<i>rom</i>	ca	3.1	1.00	1.06	1.03	1.09	1.6
	es	2.8	0.99	1.07	1.04	1.11	1.9
	fr	2.8	0.99	1.07	1.03	1.09	2.5
	it	2.7	1.00	1.05	1.02	1.08	1.8
	ro	2.7	1.00	1.04	1.04	1.07	0.3
<i>sla</i>	bg	2.5	1.01	1.05	1.02	1.08	1.7
	cs	2.8	1.00	1.58	1.03	1.06	1.2
	hr	2.8	1.00	1.03	1.04	1.08	0.2
	ru	2.7	1.00	1.02	1.03	1.05	1.2
<i>sin</i>	zh	3.6	1.00	0.98	1.01	1.00	1.3
<i>fin</i>	et	2.6	1.00	1.00	1.03	1.02	1.4
<i>tur</i>	tr	2.6	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.02	-0.3

Avg. DL in the original treebank and DLM ratio for each modification

ADE: Results for different conversions

	lang	Δ cop	Δ prep	Δ coord	Δ c-p-c
<i>ger</i>	de	-0.26	-0.03	0.03	-0.23
	en	-0.56	-0.19	-0.01	-0.72
<i>ira</i>	fa	-0.73	0.07	0.02	-0.60
<i>rom</i>	ca	0.09	0.07	-0.01	0.16
	es	-0.19	-0.19	0.02	-0.36
	fr	-0.16	-0.15	0.04	-0.27
	it	-0.22	-0.11	0.02	-0.29
	ro	-0.13	0.17	0.04	0.09
<i>sla</i>	bg	-0.31	-0.10	0.05	-0.34
	cs	-0.30	0.20	0.07	0.03
	hr	0.16	0.21	0.03	0.41
	ru	0.17	0.19	0.05	0.41
<i>sin</i>	zh	-0.25	-0.00	0.03	-0.19
<i>fin</i>	et	-0.37	0.16	0.04	-0.16
<i>tur</i>	tr	0.19	0.28	0.03	0.50

Table: Difference (Δ) between avg. unlexicalised arc direction entropy (ADE) in the original treebank and in the modified treebanks