Statistical NLP
Spring 2008

Lecture 21: Compositional Semantics

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Includes examples from Johnson, Jurafsky and Gildea, Luo, Palmer

Semantic Role Labeling (SRL)

- Characterize clauses as *relations* with *roles*:

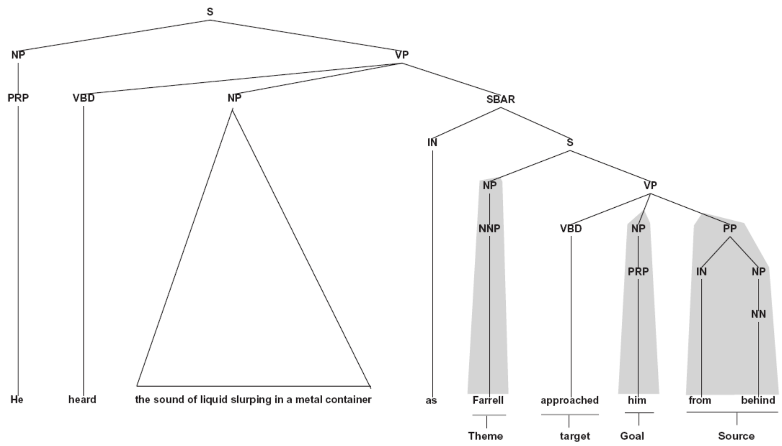
[$_{Judge}$ She] **blames** [$_{Evaluee}$ the Government] [$_{Reason}$ for failing to do enough to help] .

Holman would characterise this as **blaming** [$_{Evaluee}$ the poor] .

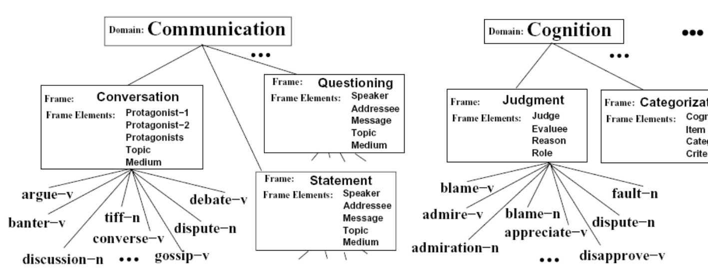
The letter quotes Black as saying that [$_{Judge}$ white and Navajo ranchers] misrepresent their livestock losses and **blame** [$_{Reason}$ everything] [$_{Evaluee}$ on coyotes] .

- Want to more than which NP is the subject (but not much more):
- Relations like *subject* are syntactic, relations like *agent* or *message* are semantic
- Typical pipeline:
  - Parse, then label roles
  - Almost all errors locked in by parser
  - Really, SRL is quite a lot easier than parsing

SRL Example



PropBank / FrameNet



- FrameNet: roles shared between verbs
- PropBank: each verb has it's own roles
- PropBank more used, because it's layered over the treebank (and so has greater coverage, plus parses)
- Note: some linguistic theories postulate even fewer roles than FrameNet (e.g. 5-20 total: agent, patient, instrument, etc.)

PropBank Example

fall.01 sense: move downward
roles: Arg1: thing falling
Arg2: extent, distance fallen
Arg3: start point
Arg4: end point

Sales fell to $251.2 million from $278.7 million.
arg1: Sales
rel: fell
arg4: to $251.2 million
arg3: from $278.7 million

PropBank Example

rotate.02 sense: shift from one thing to another
roles: Arg0: causer of shift
Arg1: thing being changed
Arg2: old thing
Arg3: new thing

Many of Wednesday's winners were losers yesterday as investors quickly took profits and rotated their buying to other issues, traders said. (wsj_1723)
arg0: investors
rel: rotated
arg1: their buying
arg3: to other issues

PropBank Example

aim.01 sense: intend, plan
roles: Arg0: aimer, planner
Arg1: plan, intent

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers aims *trace* to improve relations with vicars. (wsj_0089)

arg0: The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers
rel: aims
arg1: *trace* to improve relations with vicars

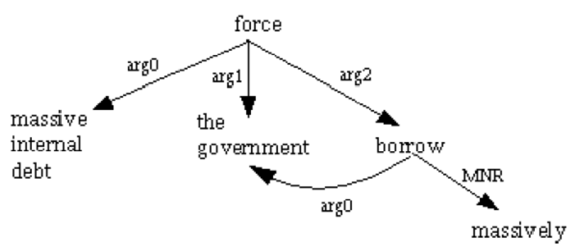
aim.02 sense: point (weapon) at
roles: Arg0: aimer
Arg1: weapon, etc.
Arg2: target

Banks have been aiming packages at the elderly.

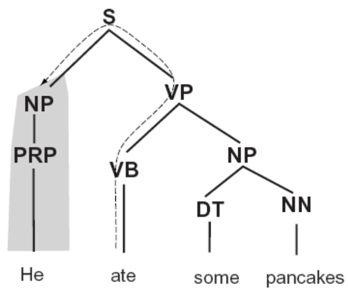
arg0: Banks
rel: aiming
arg1: packages
arg2: at the elderly

Shared Arguments

```
(NP-SBJ (JJ massive) (JJ internal) (NN debt) )
  (VP (VBZ has)
   (VP (VBN forced)
    (S
     (NP-SBJ-1 (DT the) (NN government) )
     (VP
      (VP (TO to)
       (VP (VB borrow)
        (ADVP-MNR (RB massively) )...
```



Path Features



Path	*Description*
VB↑VP↓PP	PP argument/adjunct
VB↑VP↑S↓NP	subject
VB↑VP↓NP	object
VB↑VP↑VP↑S↓NP	subject (embedded VP)
VB↑VP↓ADVP	adverbial adjunct
NN↑NP↑NP↓PP	prepositional complement of noun

Results

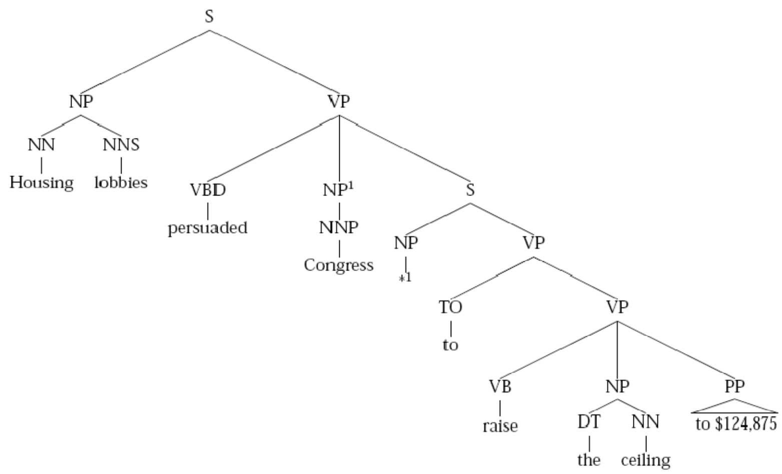
- Features:
  - Path from target to filler
  - Filler's syntactic type, headword, case
  - Target's identity
  - Sentence voice, etc.
  - Lots of other second-order features
- Gold vs parsed source trees
  - SRL is fairly easy on gold trees

CORE		ARGM	
F1	Acc.	F1	Acc.
92.2	80.7	89.9	71.8

  - Harder on automatic parses

CORE		ARGM	
F1	Acc.	F1	Acc.
84.1	66.5	81.4	55.6

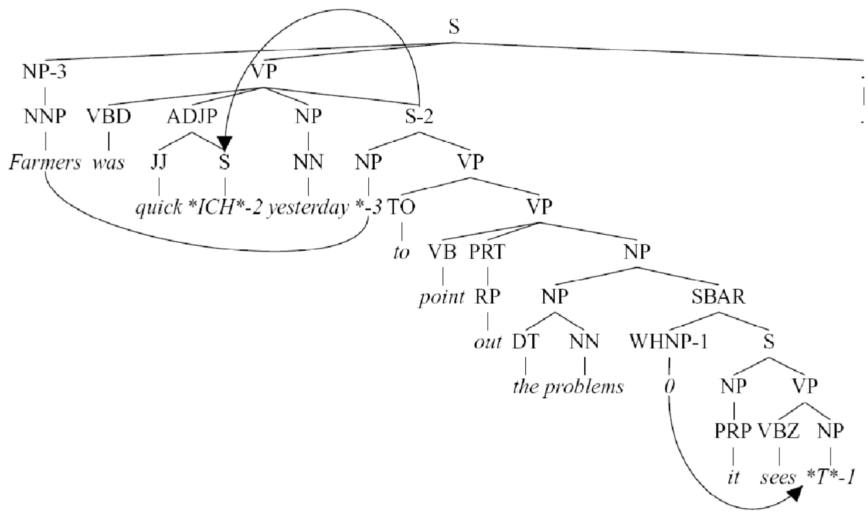
Interaction with Empty Elements



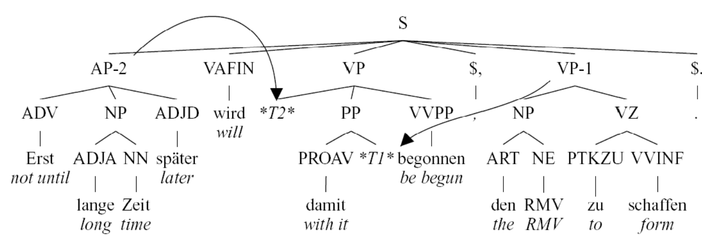
Empty Elements

- In the PTB, three kinds of empty elements:
  - Null items (usually complementizers)
  - Dislocation (WH-traces, topicalization, relative clause and heavy NP extraposition)
  - Control (raising, passives, control, shared argumentation)
- Need to reconstruct these (and resolve any indexation)

Example: English

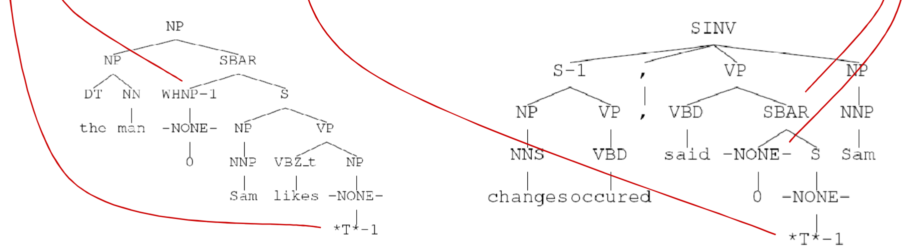


Example: German



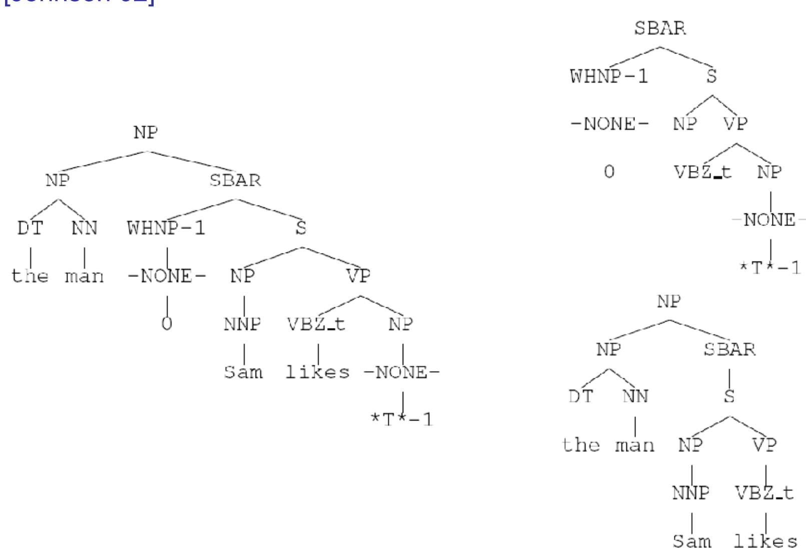
Types of Empties

Antecedent	POS	Label	Count	Description
NP	NP	*	18,334	NP trace (e.g., *Sam was seen **)
	NP	*	9,812	NP PRO (e.g., ** to sleep is nice*)
WHNP	NP	*T*	8,620	WH trace (e.g., *the woman who you saw *T**)
		U	7,478	Empty units (e.g., *$ 25 *U**)
		0	5,635	Empty complementizers (e.g., *Sam said 0 Sasha snores*)
S	S	*T*	4,063	Moved clauses (e.g., *Sam had to go, Sasha explained *T**)
WHADVP	ADVP	*T*	2,492	WH-trace (e.g., *Sam explained how to leave *T**)
	SBAR		2,033	Empty clauses (e.g., *Sam had to go, Sasha explained (SBAR)*)
	WHNP	0	1,759	Empty relative pronouns (e.g., *the woman 0 we saw*)
	WHADVP	0	575	Empty relative pronouns (e.g., *no reason 0 to leave*)



A Pattern-Matching Approach

- [Johnson 02]



Pattern-Matching Details

- Something like transformation-based learning
- Extract patterns
  - Details: transitive verb marking, auxiliaries
  - Details: legal subtrees
- Rank patterns
  - Pruning ranking: by correct / match rate
  - Application priority: by depth
- Pre-order traversal
- Greedy match

Top Patterns Extracted

Count	Match	Pattern
5816	6223	(S (NP (-NONE- *)) VP)
5605	7895	(SBAR (-NONE- 0) S)
5312	5338	(SBAR WHNP-1 (S (NP (-NONE- *T*-1)) VP))
4434	5217	(NP QP (-NONE- *U*))
1682	1682	(NP $ CD (-NONE- *U*))
1327	1593	(VP VBN_t (NP (-NONE- *)) PP)
700	700	(ADJP QP (-NONE- *U*))
662	1219	(SBAR (WHNP-1 (-NONE- 0)) (S (NP (-NONE- *T*-1)) VP))
618	635	(S S-1 , NP (VP VBD (SBAR (-NONE- 0) (S (-NONE- *T*-1)))) .)
499	512	(SINV `` S-1 , '' (VP VBZ (S (-NONE- *T*-1))) NP .)
361	369	(SINV `` S-1 , '' (VP VBD (S (-NONE- *T*-1))) NP .)
352	320	(S NP-1 (VP VBZ (S (NP (-NONE- *-1)) VP)))
346	273	(S NP-1 (VP AUX (VP VBN_t (NP (-NONE- *-1)) PP)))
322	467	(VP VBD_t (NP (-NONE- *)) PP)
269	275	(S `` S-1 , '' NP (VP VBD (S (-NONE- *T*-1))) .)

Results

Empty node POS	Empty node Label	Section 23 *P*	Section 23 *R*	Section 23 *f*	Parser output *P*	Parser output *R*	Parser output *f*
(Overall)		0.93	0.83	0.88	0.85	0.74	0.79
NP	*	0.95	0.87	0.91	0.86	0.79	0.82
NP	*T*	0.93	0.88	0.91	0.85	0.77	0.81
	0	0.94	0.99	0.96	0.86	0.89	0.88
	U	0.92	0.98	0.95	0.87	0.96	0.92
S	*T*	0.98	0.83	0.90	0.97	0.81	0.88
ADVP	*T*	0.91	0.52	0.66	0.84	0.42	0.56
SBAR		0.90	0.63	0.74	0.88	0.58	0.70
WHNP	0	0.75	0.79	0.77	0.48	0.46	0.47

A Machine-Learning Approach

- [Levy and Manning 04]
- Build two classifiers:
  - First one predicts where empties go
  - Second one predicts if/where they are bound
  - Use syntactic features similar to SRL (paths, categories, heads, etc)

	Performance on gold trees							Performance on parsed trees					
	ID			Rel	Combo			ID			Combo		
	P	R	F1	Acc	P	R	F1	P	R	F1	P	R	F1
WSJ(full)	92.0	82.9	87.2	95.0	89.6	80.1	84.6	34.5	47.6	40.0	17.8	24.3	20.5
WSJ(sm)	92.3	79.5	85.5	93.3	90.4	77.2	83.2	38.0	47.3	42.1	19.7	24.3	21.7
NEGRA	73.9	64.6	69.0	85.1	63.3	55.4	59.1	48.3	39.7	43.6	20.9	17.2	18.9

Semantic Interpretation

- Back to meaning!
  - A very basic approach to computational semantics
  - Truth-theoretic notion of semantics (Tarskian)
  - Assign a "meaning" to each word
  - Word meanings combine according to the parse structure
  - People can and do spend entire courses on this topic
  - We'll spend about an hour!
- What's NLP and what isn't?
  - Designing meaning representations?
  - Computing those representations?
  - Reasoning with them?
- Supplemental reading will be on the web page.

Meaning

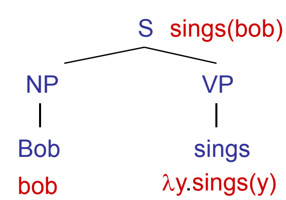
- "Meaning"
  - What is meaning?
    - "The computer in the corner."
    - "Bob likes Alice."
    - "I think I am a gummi bear."
  - Knowing whether a statement is true?
  - Knowing the conditions under which it's true?
  - Being able to react appropriately to it?
    - "Who does Bob like?"
    - "Close the door."
- A distinction:
  - Linguistic (semantic) meaning
    - "The door is open."
  - Speaker (pragmatic) meaning
- Today: assembling the semantic meaning of sentence from its parts

Entailment and Presupposition

- Some notions worth knowing:
  - Entailment:
    - A entails B if A being true necessarily implies B is true
    - ? “Twitchy is a big mouse” → “Twitchy is a mouse”
    - ? “Twitchy is a big mouse” → “Twitchy is big”
    - ? “Twitchy is a big mouse” → “Twitchy is furry”
  - Presupposition:
    - A presupposes B if A is only well-defined if B is true
    - “The computer in the corner is broken” presupposes that there is a (salient) computer in the corner

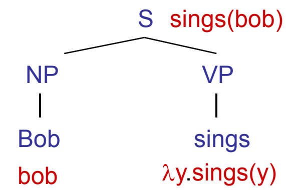
Truth-Conditional Semantics

- Linguistic expressions:
  - “Bob sings”
- Logical translations:
  - sings(bob)
  - Could be p_1218(e_397)
- Denotation:
  - [[bob]] = some specific person (in some context)
  - [[sings(bob)]] = ???
- Types on translations:
  - bob : e (for entity)
  - sings(bob) : t (for truth-value)



Truth-Conditional Semantics

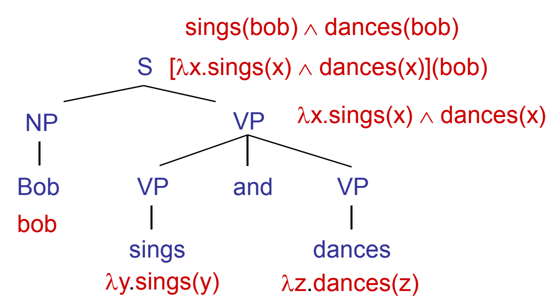
- Proper names:
  - Refer directly to some entity in the world
  - Bob : bob [[bob]]^{W} → ???
- Sentences:
  - Are either true or false (given how the world actually is)
  - Bob sings : sings(bob)



- So what about verbs (and verb phrases)?
  - sings must combine with bob to produce sings(bob)
  - The λ-calculus is a notation for functions whose arguments are not yet filled.
  - sings : λx.sings(x)
  - This is *predicate* – a function which takes an entity (type e) and produces a truth value (type t). We can write its type as e→t.
  - Adjectives?

Compositional Semantics

- So now we have meanings for the words
- How do we know how to combine words?
- Associate a combination rule with each grammar rule:
  - S : β(α) → NP : α VP : β (function application)
  - VP : λx . α(x) ∧ β(x) → VP : α and : ∅ VP : β (intersection)
- Example:

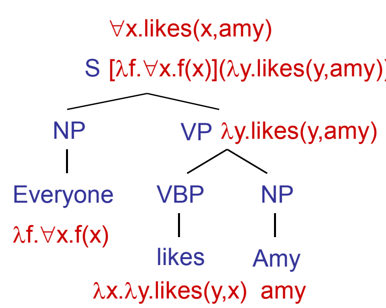


Denotation

- What do we do with logical translations?
  - Translation language (logical form) has fewer ambiguities
  - Can check truth value against a database
    - Denotation (“evaluation”) calculated using the database
  - More usefully: assert truth and modify a database
  - Questions: check whether a statement in a corpus entails the (question, answer) pair:
    - “Bob sings and dances” → “Who sings?” + “Bob”
  - Chain together facts and use them for comprehension

Other Cases

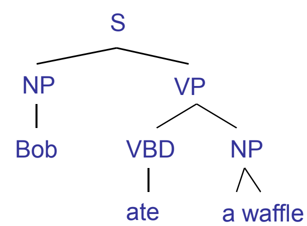
- Transitive verbs:
  - likes : λx.λy.likes(y,x)
  - Two-place predicates of type e→(e→t).
  - likes Amy : λy.likes(y,Amy) is just like a one-place predicate.
- Quantifiers:
  - What does “Everyone” mean here?
  - Everyone : λf.∀x.f(x)
  - Mostly works, but some problems
    - Have to change our NP/VP rule.
    - Won’t work for “Amy likes everyone.”
  - “Everyone likes someone.”
  - This gets tricky quickly!



Indefinites

- First try
  - "Bob ate a waffle" : ate(bob,waffle)
  - "Amy ate a waffle" : ate(amy,waffle)

- Can't be right!
  - $\exists x : waffle(x) \wedge ate(bob,x)$
  - What does the translation of "a" have to be?
  - What about "the"?
  - What about "every"?



Grounding

- Grounding
  - So why does the translation likes : $\lambda x.\lambda y.likes(y,x)$ have anything to do with actual liking?
  - It doesn't (unless the denotation model says so)
  - Sometimes that's enough: wire up bought to the appropriate entry in a database

- Meaning postulates
  - Insist, e.g $\forall x,y.likes(y,x) \rightarrow knows(y,x)$
  - This gets into lexical semantics issues

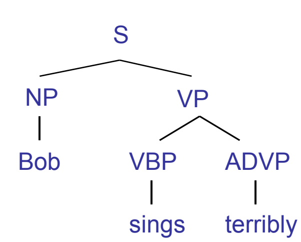
- Statistical version?

Tense and Events

- In general, you don't get far with verbs as predicates
- Better to have event variables e
  - "Alice danced" : danced(alice)
  - $\exists\, e : dance(e) \wedge agent(e,alice) \wedge (time(e) < now)$
- Event variables let you talk about non-trivial tense / aspect structures
  - "Alice had been dancing when Bob sneezed"
  - $\exists\, e, e' : \; dance(e) \wedge agent(e,alice) \wedge$
    $sneeze(e') \wedge agent(e',bob) \wedge$
    $(start(e) < start(e') \wedge end(e) = end(e')) \wedge$
    $(time(e') < now)$

Adverbs

- What about adverbs?
  - "Bob sings terribly"
  - terribly(sings(bob))?
  - (terribly(sings))(bob)?
  - $\exists e\; present(e) \wedge$
    $type(e, singing) \wedge$
    $agent(e,bob) \wedge$
    $manner(e, terrible)$?
  - It's really not this simple..



Propositional Attitudes

- "Bob thinks that I am a gummi bear"
  - thinks(bob, gummi(me)) ?
  - thinks(bob, "I am a gummi bear") ?
  - thinks(bob, ^gummi(me)) ?
- Usual solution involves intensions (^X) which are, roughly, the set of possible worlds (or conditions) in which X is true
- Hard to deal with computationally
  - Modeling other agents models, etc
  - Can come up in simple dialog scenarios, e.g., if you want to talk about what your bill claims you bought vs. what you actually bought

Trickier Stuff

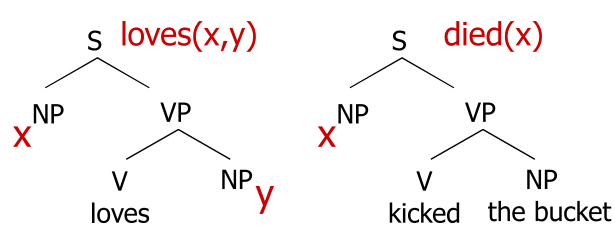
- Non-Intersective Adjectives
  - green ball : $\lambda x.[green(x) \wedge ball(x)]$
  - fake diamond : $\lambda x.[fake(x) \wedge diamond(x)]$? $\longrightarrow$ $\lambda x.[fake(diamond(x))$
- Generalized Quantifiers
  - the : $\lambda f.[\textit{unique-member}(f)]$
  - all : $\lambda f. \lambda g\ [\forall x.f(x) \rightarrow g(x)]$
  - most?
  - Could do with more general second order predicates, too (why worse?)
    - the(cat, meows), all(cat, meows)
- Generics
  - "Cats like naps"
  - "The players scored a goal"
- Pronouns (and bound anaphora)
  - "If you have a dime, put it in the meter."
- … the list goes on and on!

Multiple Quantifiers

- Quantifier scope
  - Groucho Marx celebrates quantifier order ambiguity:
    “In this country a woman gives birth every 15 min.
    Our job is to find that woman and stop her.”
- Deciding between readings
  - “Bob bought a pumpkin every Halloween”
  - “Bob put a warning in every window”
  - Multiple ways to work this out
    - Make it syntactic (movement)
    - Make it lexical (type-shifting)

Implementation, TAG, Idioms

- Add a “sem” feature to each context-free rule
  - S → NP loves NP
  - S[sem=loves(x,y)] → NP[sem=x] loves NP[sem=y]
  - Meaning of S depends on meaning of NPs
- TAG version:



- Template filling: S[sem=showflights(x,y)] →
  I want a flight from NP[sem=x] to NP[sem=y]

Modeling Uncertainty

- Gaping hole warning!
- Big difference between statistical disambiguation and statistical reasoning.

The scout saw the enemy soldiers with night goggles.

  - With probabilistic parsers, can say things like “72% belief that the PP attaches to the NP.”
  - That means that *probably* the enemy has night vision goggles.
  - However, you can’t throw a logical assertion into a theorem prover with 72% confidence.
  - Not clear humans really extract and process logical statements symbolically anyway.
  - Use this to decide the expected utility of calling reinforcements?

- In short, we need probabilistic reasoning, not just probabilistic disambiguation followed by symbolic reasoning!

CCG Parsing

- Combinatory Categorial Grammar
  - Fully (mono-) lexicalized grammar
  - Categories encode argument sequences
  - Very closely related to the lambda calculus
  - Can have spurious ambiguities (why?)

$John \vdash \mathrm{NP} : john'$

$shares \vdash \mathrm{NP} : shares'$

$buys \vdash (\mathrm{S}\backslash\mathrm{NP})/\mathrm{NP} : \lambda x.\lambda y.buys'xy$

$sleeps \vdash \mathrm{S}\backslash\mathrm{NP} : \lambda x.sleeps'x$

$well \vdash (\mathrm{S}\backslash\mathrm{NP})\backslash(\mathrm{S}\backslash\mathrm{NP}) : \lambda f.\lambda x.well'(fx)$