Lecture 10:
Using (pointwise) mutual information to cluster words

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Midterm exam: Thu, Oct 8 in class

Closed book exam:
- You are not allowed to use any cheat sheets, computers, calculators, phones etc.
  (you shouldn’t have to anyway)
- Only the material covered in lectures

Format: Short answer questions

We will have a review session on Tuesday, Oct 6 in class.
- Review the material before that class, so that we can clear up any confusions

Exam Question types

Define X:
Provide a mathematical/formal definition of X

Explain X; Explain what X is/does:
Use plain English to define X and say what X is/does

Compute X:
Return X; Show the steps required to calculate it

Draw X:
Draw a figure of X

Show/Prove that X is true/is the case/…:
This may require a (typically very simple) proof.

Discuss/Argue whether …
Use your knowledge (of X,Y,Z) to argue your point
Either a **research project** (alone or with one other student) or a **literature survey** (alone)

Upcoming deadlines:
- **Before Oct 6:** Check your idea with me
- **Oct 6 (Wk 6): Proposal due:**
  (What will you do? What papers will you read?)

Good places to find NLP papers:
- **ACL anthology** [http://aclweb.org/anthology](http://aclweb.org/anthology) covers almost everything published in NLP
- **JNLE** [http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=NLE](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=NLE) is another big NLP journal that is not part of the ACL
- Standard machine learning/AI conferences (**NIPS, ICML, IJCAI, AAAI**) and journals (**JMLR, JAIR** etc.) are okay as well.
- Other venues: check with me that this is actually NLP

**Tuesday’s key concepts**

Sequence labeling tasks:
- POS tagging
- NP chunking
- Shallow Parsing
- Named Entity Recognition

The BIO encoding for sequence labeling

**Discriminative models:**
- Maximum Entropy classifiers
- MEMMs (and CRFs)
Where we’re at

So far, we’ve looked at the structure of words, and at sequences of words (without much structure):
- Finite-State Transducers for morphology
- N-gram models for language modeling
- Hidden Markov Models for POS tagging
- MEMMs for sequence labeling

In the next few lectures, we will go back to looking at words, but now we will consider their meaning:
- Finding groups of similar words by inducing word clusters
- Computing the semantic similarity of words by representing them in a vector space
- Identifying different meanings of words by word sense disambiguation

Today’s class

Goals:
- Identify “sticky pairs” of words that always go together
- Identify semantic clusters
- Partition words into clusters such that words that belong to the same cluster are “similar”.

Mathematical tools:
- Mutual information (Brown clusters)
- Pointwise mutual information

Discrete random variables

A discrete random variable $X$ can take on values \{${x_1, \ldots, x_n}$\} with probability $p(X = x_i)$

A note on notation:
$p(X)$ refers to the distribution, while $p(X = x_i)$ refers to the probability of a specific value $x_i$, $p(X = x_i)$ also written as $p(x_i)$

In language modeling, the random variables correspond to words $W$ or to sequences of words $W^{(1)} \ldots W^{(n)}$.

Another note on notation:
We’re often sloppy in making the distinction between the $i$-th word [token] in a sequence/string, and the $i$-th word [type] in the vocabulary clear.
Mutual information $I(X;Y)$

Two random variables $X, Y$ are **independent**
if their joint distribution is equal to the product of their individual distributions:

\[ p(X, Y) = p(X)p(Y) \]

That is, for all outcomes $x, y$:

\[ p(X=x, Y=x) = p(X=x)p(Y=x) \]

$I(X;Y)$, the **mutual information** of two random variables $X$ and $Y$ is defined as

\[
I(X;Y) = \sum_{X,Y} p(X=x, Y=y) \log \frac{p(X=x, Y=y)}{p(X=x)p(Y=y)}
\]

Pointwise mutual information (PMI)

Recall that two **events** $x, y$ are **independent** if their joint probability is equal to the product of their individual probabilities:

\[ x, y \text{ are independent iff } p(x,y) = p(x)p(y) \]

\[ x, y \text{ are independent iff } \frac{p(x,y)}{p(x)p(y)} = 1 \]

In NLP, we often use the pointwise mutual information (PMI) of two outcomes/events (e.g. words):

\[
PMI(x, y) = \log \frac{p(X=x, Y=y)}{p(X=x)p(Y=y)}
\]

Using PMI to find related words

Find pairs of words $w_i, w_j$ that have high **pointwise mutual information**:

\[
PMI(w_i, w_j) = \log \frac{p(w_i, w_j)}{p(w_i)p(w_j)}
\]

Different ways of defining $p(w_i, w_j)$
give different answers.
Using PMI to find “sticky pairs”

What’s the probability of finding \( w_i, w_j \) next to each other?

\[
p(w_i, w_j) = p(“w_i w_j”)\]

Humpty Dumpty, Klux Klan, Ku Klux, Tse Tung, avant garde, gizzard shad, Bobby Orr, mutatis mutandis, Taj Mahal, Pontius Pilate, ammonium nitrate, jiggery pokery, anciens combattants, fuddle duddle, helter skelter, mumbo jumbo
(and a few more)

Using PMI to find “semantic clusters”

What’s the probability of finding \( w_i, w_j \) “near” (but not too near) each other?

\[
p(w_i, w_j) = p(w_i) p(w_j | w_i)\]

with \( p(w_j | w_i) \) the unigram probability of \( w_j \) within a window of 500 words to the left or right of \( w_i \), excluding the two words before \( w_i \) and the two words after \( w_i \).

Clustering words based on how similar their PMI is:

- we our us ourselves ours
- question questions asking answer answers answering
- tie jacket suit
- attorney counsel trial court judge
- morning noon evening night nights midnight bed
- wall ceiling walls enclosure roof
- sell buy selling buying sold

Brown clusters

**Goal:** Partition words into clusters such that words that belong to the same cluster are “similar”.

- Brown clusters use a **hard** clustering approach: each word belongs to exactly one cluster.
- Soft clustering approaches allow each word to belong to multiple clusters.
- NB: If you learn HMMs from raw text, you induce soft clusters (there is no constraint that each word can only be emitted by a single hidden state)

**Motivation:** these clusters are useful features for many NLP tasks.

- Instead of dealing with 10K or 20K or more distinct words, replace them with a much smaller number of clusters.
Brown clusters

Instead of defining n-gram models over word types, first assign each word type to one class of words, and then define an n-gram model over these classes.

These word classes are induced automatically, and are chosen to maximize the avg. mutual information of classes whose words appear next to each other.

Words belonging to the same class are syntactically and semantically similar.

Class-Based n-gram Models of Natural Language
P. Brown et al., Computational Linguistics 18(4), December 1992

Brown clusters

Define a function \( \pi(w) = c \) that assigns each word type \( w \) to a single class \( c \).

\( \pi(w) \) defines a hard clustering (or a partition) over the words

Define the probability of \( w^{(1)} \ldots w^{(n)} \) as

\[
p(w^{(1)} \ldots w^{(n)}) = \prod_i p(c(i) | c(i-1))p(w(i) | c(i))
\]

Estimate the probability of \( p(c(i) | c(i-1)) \) as

\[
\frac{\#(c(i) | c(i-1))}{\#(c(i-1))}
\]

Estimate the probability of \( p(w(i) | c(i)) \) as

\[
\frac{\#(w(i))}{\#(c(i))}
\]

NB: To avoid confusion between the classes \( c \) and count I’m using \# for frequencies/counts here.

Class-based bigram models

Define the probability of the data \( w^{(1)} \ldots w^{(n)} \) as

\[
p(w^{(1)} \ldots w^{(n)}) = \prod_i p(c(i) | c(i-1))p(w(i) | c(i))
\]

It can be shown that the probability (‘likelihood’) of the training corpus under the mapping \( \pi \) is

\[
L(\pi) = \sum_w p(w) \log p(w) + \sum_i \frac{p(c(i) | c(i-1))p(w(i) | c(i))}{p(c(i))}
\]

\[= \sum_w p(w) \log p(w) + \sum_i \frac{p(c(i) | c(i-1))p(w(i) | c(i))}{p(c(i))p(c(i-1))}\]

Unigram entropy: This is fixed!

Expected (avg.) mutual information of adjacent classes:
This depends on \( \pi \)

A “good” mapping \( \pi \) assigns high probability to the training data

Learning objective: find \( \pi^* = \max_\pi L(\pi) \)

A “good” mapping \( \pi \) has high avg. mutual information of classes that appear next to each other.
Inducing word classes

Inducing word classes = learning a (good) partition of words into classes, $\pi(w) = c$

What is a good partition, and how can we find it?
- A good language model assigns high probability to the training data ($L(\pi)$).
- For two partitions $\pi'$ and $\pi''$, $L(\pi')$ and $L(\pi'')$ differ only in the mutual information of adjacent classes.
- We want to find a $\pi$ that maximizes the expected mutual information of adjacent classes.
- Given a training corpus and a partition $\pi$, we can compute $L(\pi)$, but since we can’t enumerate all possible partitions, we can’t find the best possible $\pi$. Instead, we use a greedy algorithm.

Greedy algorithm:
- Initialization: Assign each word to its own class
- Iterative step: Find the pair of classes that has the smallest loss in average mutual information.
- Repeat until C classes remain

This results in a hierarchical (“bottom-up”) clustering.

Hierarchical clustering

Dealing with larger vocabularies

Computationally, this algorithm does not scale to large vocabularies.

Variant:
- Sort words by frequency
- Initialization: Assign first C words to their own classes
- Iterative step: take next most frequent word to get C+1 classes. Find the best merger.
Examples of word classes

- Friday Monday Thursday Wednesday Tuesday Saturday Sunday weekends Sundays Saturdays
- people guys folks fellows CEOs chaps doubters commies unfortunates blokes
- down backwards ashore sideways southward northward overboard aloft downwards adrift
- had hadn’t hath would’ve could’ve should’ve must’ve might’ve
- that tha theta
- head body hands eyes voice arm seat eye mouth
- rise focus depend rely concentrate dwell capitalize embark intrude typewriting
- running moving playing setting holding carrying passing cutting driving fighting
- brought moved picked caught tied gathered cleared hung lifted

How can you use these clusters?

Most NLP systems are based on some form of machine learning.

Clusters provide useful features that can help deal with the sparsity of words:
Instead of (or in addition to) 10K/20K or more distinct words, use a much smaller number of clusters.

Today’s key concepts

Clustering: hard vs. soft

Mutual information
Pointwise mutual information

Clustering:
using PMI of words
class-based bigram models: minimize the mutual information of adjacent classes