BUAP: Lexical and Semantic Similarity for Cross-lingual Textual Entailment

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Abstract
In this paper we present a report of the two different runs submitted to the task 8 of Semeval 2012 for the evaluation of Cross-lingual Textual Entailment in the framework of Content Synchronization. Both approaches are based on textual similarity, and the entailment judgment (bidirectional, forward, backward or no entailment) is given based on a set of decision rules. The first approach uses textual similarity on the translated and original versions of the texts, whereas the second approach expands the terms by means of synonyms. The evaluation of both approaches show a similar behavior which is still close to the average and median.

1 Introduction
Cross-lingual Textual Entailment (CLTE) has been recently proposed by (Mehdad et al., 2010; Mehdad et al., 2011) as an extension of the Textual Entailment task (Dagan and Glickman, 2004). Given a text (T) and an hypothesis (H) in different languages, the CLTE task consists of determining if the meaning of H can be inferred from the meaning of T. In this paper we present a report of the obtained results after submitting two different runs for the Task 8 of Semeval 2012, named “Cross-lingual Textual Entailment for Content Synchronization” (Negri et al., 2012). In this task, the Cross-Lingual Textual Entailment addresses textual entailment recognition under a new dimension (cross-linguality), and within a new challenging application scenario (content synchronization). The task 8 of Semeval 2012 may be formally defined as follows:

Given a pair of topically related text fragments (T₁ and T₂) in different languages, the task consists of automatically annotating it with one of the following entailment judgments:

- Bidirectional (T₁ → T₂ & T₁ ← T₂): the two fragments entail each other (semantic equivalence)
- Forward (T₁ → T₂ & T₁ ! ← T₂): unidirectional entailment from T₁ to T₂
- Backward (T₁ ! → T₂ & T₁ ← T₂): unidirectional entailment from T₂ to T₁
- No Entailment (T₁ ! → T₂ & T₁ ! ← T₂): there is no entailment between T₁ and T₂

In this task, both T₁ and T₂ are assumed to be TRUE statements; hence in the dataset there are no contradictory pairs. Cross-lingual datasets are available for the following language combinations:

- Spanish/English (SPA-ENG)
- German/English (DEU-ENG)
- Italian/English (ITA-ENG)
- French/English (FRA-ENG)

The remaining of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the two different approaches presented in the competition. The obtained results are shown and discussed in Section 3. Finally, the findings of this work are given in Section 4.
2 Experimental setup

For this experiment we have considered to tackle the CLTE task by means of textual similarity and textual length. In particular, the textual similarity is used to determine whether some kind of entailment exists or not. We have established the threshold of 0.5 for the similarity function as evidence of textual entailment. Since the two sentences to be evaluated are written in two different languages, we have translated each sentence to the other language, so that, we have two sentences in English, and two sentences in the original language (Spanish, German, Italian and French). We have used the Google translate for this purpose.

The corpora used in the experiments comes from a cross-lingual Textual Entailment dataset presented in (Negri et al., 2011), and provided by the task organizers. We have employed the training dataset only for adjust some parameters of the system, but the approach is knowledge-based and, therefore, it does not need a training corpus. Both, the training and test corpus contain 500 sentences for each language.

The textual length is used to determine the entailment judgment (bidirectional, forward, backward, no entailment). We have basically, assumed that the length of a text may give some evidence of the type of entailment. The decision rules used for determining the entailment judgment are described in Section 2.3.

In this competition we have submitted two different runs which differ with respect to the type of textual similarity used (lexical vs semantic). The first one, calculates the similarity using only the translated version of the original sentences, whereas the second approach uses text expansion by means of synonyms and, thereafter, it calculates the similarity between the pair of sentences.

Let $T_1$ be the sentence in the original language, $T_2$ the $T_1$ topically related text fragment (written in English). Let $T_3$ be the English translation of $T_1$, and $T_4$ the translation of $T_2$ to the original language (Spanish, German, Italian and French). The formal description of these two approaches are given as follows.

2.1 Approach 1: Lexical similarity

The evidence of textual entailment between $T_1$ and $T_2$ is calculated using two formulae of lexical similarity. Firstly, we determine the similarity between the two texts written in the source language ($SimS$). Additionally, we calculate the lexical similarity between the two sentences written in the target language ($SimT$), in this case English.

Given the limited text length of the text fragments, we have used the Jaccard coefficient as similarity measure. Eq. (1) shows the lexical similarity for the two texts written in the original language, whereas, Eq. (2) presents the Jaccard coefficient for the texts written in English.

$$
simS = SimJaccard(T_1, T_4) = \frac{|T_1 \cup T_4|}{|T_1 \cap T_4|} \tag{1}
$$

$$
simT = SimJaccard(T_2, T_3) = \frac{|T_2 \cup T_3|}{|T_2 \cap T_3|} \tag{2}
$$

2.2 Approach 2: Semantic similarity

In this case we calculate the semantic similarity between the two texts written in the original language ($SimS$), and the semantic similarity between the two text fragments written in English ($SimT$). The semantic level of similarity is given by considering the synonyms of each term for each sentence (in the original and target language). For this purpose, we have employed five dictionaries containing synonyms for the five different languages considered in the competition (English, Spanish, German, Italian, and French)$^{2}$. In Table 1 we show the number of terms, so as the number of synonyms in average by term considered for each language.

Let $T_1 = w_{1,1}w_{1,2}...w_{1,|T_1|}$, $T_2 = w_{2,1}w_{2,2}...w_{2,|T_2|}$ be the source and target sentences, and let $T_3 = w_{3,1}w_{3,2}...w_{3,|T_3|}$, $T_4 = w_{4,1}w_{4,2}...w_{4,|T_4|}$ be translated version of the original source and target sentences, respectively. The synonyms of a given word $w_{i,k}$, expressed as $synset(w_{i,k})$, are obtained from the aforementioned dictionaries by extracting the synonyms of $w_{i,k}$. In order to obtain a better matching between the terms contained in the text fragments and the terms in the

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$^{1}$http://translate.google.com.mx/

$^{2}$http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/en/dictionaries
Table 1: Dictionaries of synonyms used for term expansion

| Language  | Terms | synonyms per term (average) |
|-----------|-------|-----------------------------|
| English   | 2,764 | 60                          |
| Spanish   | 9,887 | 45                          |
| German    | 21,958| 115                         |
| Italian   | 25,724| 56                          |
| French    | 36,207| 93                          |

dictionary, we have stemmed all the terms using the Porter stemmer.

In order to determine the semantic similarity between two terms of sentences written in the source language \((w_{1,i} \text{ and } w_{4,j})\) we use Eq. (3). The semantic similarity between two terms of the English sentences are calculated as shown in Eq. (4).

\[
sim(w_{1,i}, w_{1,j}) = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } (w_{1,i} == w_{4,j}) \land w_{1,i} \in \text{synset}(w_{4,j}) \land w_{4,j} \in \text{synset}(w_{1,i}) \\
0 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
\]

(3)

\[
sim(w_{2,i}, w_{3,j}) = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } (w_{2,i} == w_{3,j}) \land w_{2,i} \in \text{synset}(w_{3,j}) \land w_{3,j} \in \text{synset}(w_{2,i}) \\
0 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
\]

(4)

Both equations consider the existence of semantic similarity when the two words are identical, or when the same of the two words appear in the synonym set of the other word.

The semantic similarity of the complete text fragments \(T_1 \text{ and } T_4 (\text{simS})\) is calculated as shown in Eq. (5). Whereas, the semantic similarity of the complete text fragments \(T_2 \text{ and } T_3 (\text{simT})\) is calculated as shown in Eq. (6).

\[
simS(T_1, T_4) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{\left|T_1\right|} \sum_{j=1}^{\left|T_4\right|} \text{sim}(w_{1,i}, w_{4,j})}{\left|T_1 \cup T_4\right|}
\]

(5)

\[
simT(T_2, T_3) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{\left|T_2\right|} \sum_{j=1}^{\left|T_3\right|} \text{sim}(w_{2,i}, w_{3,j})}{\left|T_2 \cup T_3\right|}
\]

(6)

2.3 Decision rules

Both approaches used the same decision rules in order to determine the entailment judgment for a given pair of text fragments \((T_1 \text{ and } T_2)\). The following algorithm shows the decision rules used.

Algorithm 1.

If \(|T_2| < |T_3|\) then

\text{forward}

ElseIf \(|T_2| > |T_3|\) then

\text{backward}

ElseIf \((|T_1| == |T_4| \text{ and } |T_2| == |T_3|)\) then

\text{bidirectional}

Else \text{no entailment}

As mentioned above, the rules employed the lexical or semantic textual similarity, and the textual length for determining the textual entailment.

3 Results

In Table 2 we show the overall results obtained by the two approaches submitted to the competition. We also show the highest, lowest, average and median overall results obtained in the competition.

|                | SPA-ENG | ITA-ENG | FRA-ENG | DEU-ENG |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Highest        | 0.632   | 0.566   | 0.57    | 0.558   |
| Average        | 0.407   | 0.362   | 0.366   | 0.357   |
| Median         | 0.346   | 0.336   | 0.336   | 0.336   |
| Lowest         | 0.266   | 0.278   | 0.278   | 0.262   |
| BUAP_run1      | 0.35    | 0.334   | 0.334   | 0.33    |
| BUAP_run2      | 0.366   | 0.344   | 0.342   | 0.268   |

Table 2: Overall statistics obtained in the Task 8 of SemEval 2012

The runs submitted perform similar, but the semantic approach obtained a slightly better performance. The two results are above the median but below the average. We consider that better results may be obtained if the two features used (textual similarity and textual length) were introduced into a supervised classifier, so that, the decision rules were approximated on the basis of a training dataset, instead of the empirical setting done in this work. Future experiments will be carried out in this direction.
4 Discussion and conclusion

Two different approaches for the Cross-lingual Textual Entailment for Content Synchronization task of Semeval 2012 are reported in this paper. We used two features for determining the textual entailment judgment between two texts $T_1$ and $T_2$ (written in two different languages). The first approach proposed used lexical similarity, meanwhile the second used semantic similarity by means of term expansion with synonyms.

Even if the performance of both approaches is above the median and slightly below the average, we consider that we may easily improve this performance by using syntactic features of the text fragments. Additionally, we are planning to integrate some supervised techniques based on decision rules which may be trained in a supervised dataset. Future experiments will be executed in this direction.

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