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Day 3: Heuristic Approaches (continued); Corpora for Discourse Anaphora

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⇒ Heuristic algorithms for Definite NP anaphors

[from Lecture 1:

Grund, 1990] reported 269/745 (36%) definite NPs in Swedish technical
prose were *isolated mention* (i.e., non-anaphoric).

Vieira & Vieira, 1998] reported 52% of definite NPs in WSJ portion of the
Penn TreeBank were *discourse new* (i.e., non-anaphoric), and an additional
5% were bridging/associative anaphors (i.e., non-coreferential).

Therefore, one might try to *exclude* instances of non-referential and non-anaphoric
the NPs at some point in the resolution process, rather than

treating them as *out-of-algorithm* errors in the evaluation;

manually excluding them right before evaluation.

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Day 3: Heuristic Approaches to Anaphor Resolution (continued)

- Identifying and resolving definite NP anaphors
- Identifying and resolving event reference [Eckert & Strube,2000; Byron
2002; Navarretta 2004]

Day 3: Corpora for Discourse Anaphora

- Gold Standard annotation & Annotation tools
- Annotation schemata – GNOME, Penn Discourse TreeBank
- Annotated corpora – GNOME, PDTB
- Automated annotation and “noisy” gold standards [Kehler, Appelt et al 04]
- Discussion
- Summary

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Non-anaphoric Definite NPs

[Vieira & Poesio 2000] attempted to recognise and exclude from resolution

- **Functional definites:** Definite NPs with an ordinal or superlative modifier

◦ the second woman to sail solo around the world

◦ the most convenient place to stop

or with a head such as *fact*, *belief*, *fear*, etc.

◦ the belief (or fear) that one will live forever

- **Appositives & Predicate nominatives** such as

◦ Glenn Cox, the president of Phillips Petroleum

◦ Glenn Cox was the president of Phillips Petroleum from 1986–1990.

If resolution failed to provide an antecedent, they tried to exclude from evaluation

- Definite NPs identified as **Determined Proper Names** – e.g.

◦ The Federal Trade Commission

◦ The European Working Time Directive

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Definites established by restrictive modifiers – e.g.

○ the hotel we stayed at last summer

“Larger situation” definites – e.g.

○ the sun, the pope

Success in 2-way classification of definite NPs into *discourse new* (DN) and

thoritic:

precision: 60-75%

recall: 72-85%

score: 70-77%

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ed on 1600 articles from MUC-4, and tested on 50 texts, performance of
& Riloff’s DN detector was

R	P	Baseline (assign DN to all)	100	81.7	Syntactic Heuristics+S1+EHP+DO
			72.2	82.2	

[Bean & Riloff, 1999] add two *discourse* features and a *frequency* feature, all derived from 1600 articles in the MUC-4 corpus.

- Any definite NPs found in the first sentence (S1) of a text (849 NPs)

- NPs exhibiting similar patterns to those extracted from S1s (Existential Head Pattern, EHP)

the N+ Government, extracted from *the Salvadorean Government*,
the Guatemalan Government, etc.

- additional determined proper names, identified by their appearing at least 5 times with the definite article and never with the indefinite article (Definite only, DO), such as

the National Guard, *the FBI*, etc.

(65 head nouns, 321 full NPs)

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Other Non-anaphoric Definite NPs

- (1) [The British Navy]₁ is considering [a new ship]₂ ...
[The Navy]₃ would like [the new ship]₄ to ...

• [The British Navy]₁ <+DN, +unique >

• [a new ship]₂ <+DN, -unique >

• [The Navy]₃ <-DN, +unique >

• [the new ship]₄ <-DN, -unique >

may differ from those significant to NPs that are *discourse new* (DN), since *uniqueness* and *DN* are independent features:

- “larger situation” definites
- functional (semantic) definites
- proper names

Urypina (2003) noticed that properties significant to *uniquely specifying* NPs

Discourse New Detection / Uniqueness Detection

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Detectors for DN and Uniqueness

pina (2003) developed separate detectors for *DN* and *uniqueness*, both based on a set of 32 features:

– e.g., capitalisation, special symbols, digits
 typing-level features
 syntactic features – e.g., part-of-speech (POS) of NP head, type of determiner, /s post-modification, c/s appositive

context features – e.g., distance in NPs to previous same-headed NP (if any), distance in Ss to previous same-headed NP (if any),

web-based frequency information on whole NP and its head (H)

count("the <NP>") / count("<NP>") – rough indicator for plurals
 count("the <NP>") / count("<NP>") – rough indicator for plurals
 count("the <H>") / count("<H>") – rough indicator for plurals
 count("the <H>") / count("<H>") – rough indicator for plurals

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Performance of DN Detector

pina took 20 texts from the MUC-7 corpus. She trained the ML classifier on each subset of 19 texts, tested it on the held out text, and then averaged results.

Using for *precision*, the DN detector's performance was

All the entities	Features		Syntax+Context	
	P	R	P	R
	86.3	84.3	88.5	87.9

performance of the *uniqueness* detector was even better

Optimization	P	R	F
Best precision	95.0	83.5	88.9
Best recall	87.2	97.0	91.8
Best accuracy	87.8	96.6	92.0

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Singular non-uniques occur about equally often as definites and indefinites – i.e.,
 $\text{count}(\text{"the <NP>"}) / \text{count}(\text{"a <NP>"}) \sim 1$.

e.g. $\text{count}(\text{"the retailer"}) / \text{count}(\text{"a retailer"}) = 204551/309392 \sim .65$

While singular uniques occur much more often as a definite.

$\text{count}(\text{"the government"}) / \text{count}(\text{"a government"}) = 5539661/1109574 \sim 5$

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Since *+unique* and *-unique* NPs are clearly separable, this suggests using a *uniqueness* detector before assessing *DN*.

To do this, Urypina trained the *DN* detector separately on *+unique* NPs and *-unique* NPs, which improved *precision*, without a significant drop in *recall*.

Uniques	Non-uniques		All	
	P	R	P	R
76.1	68.8	85.2	88.9	84.6
89.6	88.9	90.4	88.9	86.7

The attributes the low performance on detecting whether *uniques* are *DN* to her (incorrect) "invariant head" assumption about subsequent reference to *uniques*:

- Correct for "The British Navy", "The Navy"
- Incorrect for "Lockheed Martin Corporation", "Lockheed Martin", "Lockheed";

Nevertheless, it appears useful to determine *uniqueness* prior to attempting to detect *DN* NPs.

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⇒ Heuristic approaches to event reference

[from Lecture 1 that the same forms that can be used for *coreference* & demonstrative pronouns, headed NPs) can also be used to refer to *act objects* (facts, events, states, propositions, speech acts, actions) associated with VP, clauses, sequences of clauses or utterances.

I'm not inviting you to my party.
... *This* shouldn't offend you because ...
... *It's* not because I don't like you, but ...

as it makes sense to filter out *discourse new* NPs before attempting to *anaphoric* ones, it also makes sense to distinguish those instances that are likely to refer to NP-evoked entities from those that are likely to refer to ally-evoked AOs.

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nominal Anaphora in Spoken vs. Written Language

ence resolution algorithms designed for written text are not necessarily appropriate for spoken dialogue because their unit of analysis is the sentence, where spoken language is often made of fragments; given point in the dialogue.

pronouns in spoken dialogue have **no** antecedent. In the SwitchBoard corpus, [Eckert & Strube 2000] estimate that 33% lack an antecedent.

needs a reference resolution algorithm specified in terms of units that are that *common ground* has been achieved between the participants, exactly indicating what entities exist in the shared discourse model for frequent anaphoric reference.

Resolving Event Reference

Recall also that event reference is constrained to have an AO of the right sort for what's predicated of it.

(3) John kicked Sam. **This/That* lasted until Sam surrendered.
(4) Fred thought John kicked Sam. *This/That* lasted until he learned otherwise.
What's the problem with Example 3?

Usually hearers can find a way of interpreting a VP, clause, sequence of clauses or utterance in terms of the required type of AO. So antecedents of DDs are rarely far away.

✓ As one is attending to instances likely to refer to AOs, one can simultaneously try to identify its antecedent and coerce it to the right type of AO.

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Frequency of Event Reference

[Eckert & Strube 2000] also report that antecedents for 22% of pronouns in SwitchBoard come from units other than NPs.

[Byron 2002] reports that of the 180 referential 3rd person and demonstrative pronouns in 10 of the Trains93 dialogues, only about half have NP antecedents. [Navarretta 2004] reports that antecedents for 15% of her corpus of Danish text and 48% of her corpus of Danish dialogues came from units other than NPs.

Here, briefly consider these three efforts to resolve both NP coreferential pronouns and pronouns referring to AOs.

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Eckert & Strube Algorithm

t & Strube's approach [1999,2000] was designed for spoken dialogue, though it can be adapted for written text. It identifies the *antecedent* of a noun that refers to an AO, but not the AO itself that is required by its predicative context.

E 1: Examine the predicative context of the input to determine whether it is *compatible* with the input referring to an individual, concrete entity *compatible* – *I) or *incompatible* with the input referring to an AO *compatible* – *A) or compatible with both (*ambiguous*).

E 2: Resolve the input or, if unresolvable, classify it as a vague 3rd person noun (*VagPro*) or vague demonstrative (*VagDem*).

pronoun: An anaphor in a position where it cannot refer to an AO: *Equative* constructions, where the anaphor is equated with a concrete individual referent – e.g., *x is my car*.

Copula constructions whose predicate adjectives can only be applied to a concrete individual referent – e.g., *x is loud, expensive, tasty*.
Arguments of verbs describing physical contact/stimulation – e.g., *break x*, *think x*

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Phase 1: *I and *A

Pronouns are characterised as *I or *A (or neither), depending on an (incomplete) set of approximations of preferences.
***I pronoun:** An anaphor in a position where it cannot refer to individual, concrete entities:

- *Equative* constructions, where the anaphor is equated with an AO e.g., *this/that/it is only a suggestion*.
- *Copula* constructions whose predicate adjectives can only be applied to AOs e.g., *this/that/it is false*.
- Arguments of propositional attitude verbs or of verbs that mainly take S'-complements – e.g. *assume this/that/it say this/that/it*.
- Object of *do* – i.e., *do it/this/that*.
- *Equative* constructions, where the anaphor is equated with a reason – e.g. *this/that/it <be> because/why* – or a cleft *how* construction – *this/that/it <be> how*.

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Phase 2: 3rd person pronoun

case PRO is *A
if resolveInd(PRO) *Using Strube Alg*
then classify as IPro
else classify as VagPro
case PRO is *I
if resolveDD(PRO)
then classify as DDPro
else classify as VagPro
case PRO is ambiguous
if resolveInd(PRO) *Using Strube Alg*
then classify as IPro
else classify as DDPro
then classify as DDPro
else classify as VagPro

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Phase 2: Demonstrative

```

DEM is *I
if resolveDD(DEM)
  then classify as DDem
  else classify as VagDem
DEM is *A
if resolveInd(DEM) Using Strube Alg
  then classify as IDem
  else classify as VagDem
DEM is ambiguous
if resolveDD(DEM)
  then classify as DDDEM
  else if resolveInd(DEM)
    then classify as IDem
    else classify as VagDem
**different preference than PRO**

```

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resolveInd, S-list({Europe and NA}, schizophrenia) → schizophrenia
 resolveInd, S-list({Europe and NA}, schizophrenia, those born in mid-March, March) → schizophrenia
 resolveInd, S-list(schizophrenia, the offspring of ..., their pale-skinned *evres*, the countryside, dark-skinned immigrants, northern countries, people in cities, cities, those born in the countryside) → schizophrenia
 ResolveDD → [sAnd the offspring ...]

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Examples

Schizophrenia is mysterious. In Europe and NA *ti* is commonest in those born in mid-March. *It*₂ is more prevalent among people born in cities than those born in the countryside. And the offspring of dark-skinned immigrants to northern countries are 3-4 times more likely than their pale-skinned *confreves* to suffer from *it*₃.

*That*₄ looks like a disparate collection of facts.

[The Economist, 9 Feb 02, *Let the Sun Shine* in p.83]

Phase 1

*it*₁: ambiguous?

*it*₂: ambiguous?

*it*₃: ambiguous?

*that*₄: ambiguous?

S-list ranking(review): old(*U*₁) < old(*U*₁₋₁) < mediated(*U*₁) < mediated(*U*₁₋₁) < new(*U*₁) < new(*U*₁₋₁)

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PHORA [Byron 2002]

- PHORA operates on the output of the TRAINS'93 interpreter, which associates a semantic class with each argument of each predicate and with the subject or predicate adjective and predicate nominative constructions. That acts as a constraint on referring expressions – e.g.

So *it* will get there at 3pm.

(Arrive : theme x : dest y : time z)

x ∈ Movable-Object

That will take two hours.

(Take-time : theme x : cost y)

x ∈ Event

- Using semantic class information, PHORA attempts to resolve event reference as well as identifying antecedents.

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Total 3rd person pros (it, they, them, t'selves)
 Total demonstrative pros (that, this, those)
 Out of Scope

Raw Word count	119	147	326
Referential pros	87	111	0 524
Excluded pros	7	11	326
Evaluation set (Ref-Excl)	80	100	0
LRC baseline	52	14	0
+ semantic type constraint	58	19	0
+ considering AO referents	64	56	0
+ different search orders	63	67	0

N.B. Byron notes that *without* domain-specific semantics from TRAINS⁷ interpreter and no other source of lexical semantic information, only 51% of test pronouns are correctly resolved.

⇒ Corpora for Discourse Anaphora

A *Gold Standard*, indicating correct labels, is needed for all evaluation. (Labels can be POS-tags, syntactic units, word senses, predicate-argument sets, anaphor-antecedent pairs, coreference sets, ...)

This Gold Standard is also often used in training corpus-based approaches to *coreference resolution* and *anaphora resolution*.

A Gold Standard usually produced manually, usually at significant cost, so it worth making them *reusable*.

in Eckert & Strube's approach, PHORA keeps potential referents for event anaphora separate from those for referential anaphors;

uses different search orders for resolving 3rd person singular and demonstrative pronouns.

- 3rd sg pros try NP-evoked entities first;

- Demonstrative pros try clausally-evoked entities first.

because dialogue rather than written text, PHORA doesn't associate a potential event with an indefinite NP or an utterance expressing REQUEST speech acts

the (containing) utterance is confirmed by the other dialogue participant.

PHORA uses *referring functions* [Nunberg, 1979] to coerce plausible referents to entity that meets semantic class constraints.

Event(d): d → event

Proposition(d): d → proposition

Situation(d): d → situation

olving Inter-sentential Coreference & Event Reference in I

pus for [Navaretta 2004] contains both texts (computer manuals, novels, ...) and previously transcribed dialogues (doctor-patient, everyday (transation).

employs a salience-ordering on NP-evoked entities that reflects focus-marking (finish and common use of parallelism.

the Eckert & Strube and Byron, keeps potential referents for event and

referential anaphora separate and uses different search strategies for

nstrative and 3rd person pronouns. But strategies also differ for weak and

g pronouns.

because problematic cases are manually excluded and intra-sentential pronouns resolved manually, results are not really comparable with those of Byron and t & Strube.

Annotation: Coreference Chains

Purpose: To identify all expressions (*markables*) that denote/describe the same entity.

Called *Identity of reference* in the MUC co-reference task definition. However, expressions are not necessarily those standardly taken to refer – e.g.

Expression: “union leaders”

“union” marked and indexed as denoting entity **a**

“union leaders” marked and indexed as denoting entity **b**

→ ((union)_a leaders)_b

main forms of Gold Standard annotation:
n-line annotation, where labels (and possibly associated features) are inserted into the source text;

stand-off annotation, where each set of labels (and associated features) exists in a separate file, keyed to an index of the source text – e.g.

- character offset from start of file
- word token offset from start of file
- hierarchical offset from start of file, e.g., (<P>, <S>, <token>)

Entity accepted that *stand-off annotation* is more generally reusable.

Real annotation systems available for creating *stand-off annotation*: MMax2 (German Media Lab, Heidelberg), WordFreak (Institute for Research in Cognitive Science, University of Pennsylvania), NITE

sequence of *markables* that denote/describe the same thing is called a *reference chain*.

... (a1 ...
... (a2 ...
... (a3 ...

case of coreference resolution, the Gold Standard is manually annotated coreference chains of *markables*.

Guidelines for annotating markables:

The only *markables* are nouns, noun phrases (NPs) – including Named Entities – and pronouns.

A substring of a Named Entity is **not** markable, hence can't participate in a reference chain:

Equitable of Iowa has its company headquarters in Ames, Iowa.

In a report issued January 5, 1995, the program manager said that there would be no new funds this year.

- A pronominal modifier is a markable only if it is coreferential either with a Named Entity or with the syntactic head of an NP.
He was accused of money laundering and (drug)_k trafficking. However, the trade in (drugs)_k ...
- The noun that heads an NP is not a separate markable. It is markable only as part of the entire NP.
(The rate)_{e6}, which was (6 percent)_{e6}, was higher than that offered by any other bank.
“That” is not separately markable as being coreferential with “the rate”, as it heads the NP “that offered by any other bank”;

MUC Coreference Annotation

```
<COREF ID="MARKABALE_39" TYPE="IDENT" REF="MARKABALE_40"> there</COREF> and see
<COREF ID="MARKABALE_41" TYPE="IDENT" REF="MARKABALE_42" MIN="planes">these planes<
all the time."
</p>
```

This doesn't surprise me at all," said Trish Neusch, who farms land near the plant 17 miles northeast of Amarillo and 7 miles from the airport . We are out there and see these planes all the time."

Coreference annotation

```
doesn't surprise <COREF ID="MARKABALE_33">me</COREF> at all," said
EF ID="MARKABALE_32" TYPE="IDENT" REF="MARKABALE_33">Trish Neusch</COREF>,
farms <COREF ID="MARKABALE_40" MIN="land" and near
EF ID="MARKABALE_34" TYPE="IDENT" REF="MARKABALE_20">the plant</COREF></COREF>
les northeast of
EF ID="MARKABALE_35" TYPE="IDENT" REF="MARKABALE_36">Amarillo</COREF> and
es from <COREF ID="MARKABALE_37" TYPE="IDENT" REF="38">the airport</COREF>.
re out
```

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Exercise: Annotating Markables and Coreference

Eastern Air^{a1} Proposes (Date for Talks on ((Pay)^{c1}-Cut^{d1} Plan^{b1} Eastern Airlines^{a2} executives notified (union)^{e1} leaders that the carrier wishes to discuss selective ((wage)^{c2} reductions^{d2} on (Feb. 3)^{b2} . (Union)^{e2} representatives who could be reached^{f1} said (they)^{f2} hadn't decided whether (they)^{f3} would respond. By proposing (a meeting (date)^{b3} , (Eastern)^{a3} moved one step closer toward reopening current high-cost contract agreements with ((its)^{a4} unions)^{e3} .

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Text 2:

(Ocean Drilling & Exploration Co.)^{a1} will sell ((its)^{a2} contract-drilling (business)^{b1} , and took a \$50.9 million loss from discontinued operations in (the third quarter)^{c1} because of the planned sale . (The New Orleans oil and gas exploration and diving operations company)^{a3} added that (it)^{a4} doesn't expect any further adverse financial impact from the restructuring. . . . In (the third quarter)^{c2} , (the company , which is 61%-owned by Murphy Oil Corporation of Arkansas)^{a5} , had (a net loss of (\$46.9 million)^{d1} , or (91 cents a share)^{d2}^{e1} It has long been rumored that (Ocean Drilling)^{a6} would sell (the unit)^{b1} to concentrate on (its)^{a7} core oil and gas business.

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Penn Discourse Treebank (PDTB)

<http://www.cis.upenn.edu/~pdtb>

stand-off annotation of discourse connectives and their arguments in the Penn WSJ corpus (annotation over raw text)

– Done with WordFreak

– Identifying connectives and their arguments

– Characterising the sense(s) of each connective and its arguments.

– Exposes a clearly defined and relatively easily identifiable level of discourse structure whose usefulness is not limited to one particular theory of discourse.

– Integrated with the Penn TreeBank (PTB) and PropBank

– Aimed at supporting linguistic discovery and the development of robust algorithms for discourse processing.

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Annotatable arguments in PDTB

– Typically, an arg must be a clause, sentence, sentence sequence,

– nominalisation, discourse dctic (*this*, *that*), VP (in coordinated VPs) – i.e.,

– thing interpretable as an *abstract object*.

a. Even though critical, [it was just the kind of attention they were seeking].
So [they fired back at the Goldman Sachs objections in their own economics letter, "The BMC Report:"]

b. Buyers can look forward to double-digit annual returns if [they are right].
But they will have disappointing returns or even losses if [interest rates rise] instead.

c. But some investors have used such filings [to boost the value of their stock holdings], which – without buying more stock – [they] then [sold].

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Inter-annotator Reliability: Argument Annotation

- Annotation of four types of connectives and their arguments
 - Explicit connectives (~20k tokens): coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, subordinators, discourse adverbials
 - Implicit connectives (~10k tokens) between sentences in the same paragraph with no explicit connective between them.
 - NOT pragmatic discourse markers such as "now", "well", "so".
- Annotation of the "senses" of connectives. (N.B. Since all are binary, one can annotate their arguments *without* having to annotate sense.)
- Annotation done by 2–4 annotators
- Expected date of completion: November 2005
- Extensive guide to annotation:
<http://www.cis.upenn.edu/~pdtb/manual/pdtb-tutorial.pdf>

- 10 explicit connectives – 2717 tokens
 - Independent assessment of agreement for each argument (ARG1 and ARG2).
Exact match: 90.2% overall (92.4% on subordinating conjunctions, 71.8% on adverbials)
 - Partial overlap: 94.5% overall
- When argument annotations overlapped but didn't match exactly, it was due to differential inclusion of:

- a clause's governing verb
- a dependent clause at the periphery of an argument
- a parenthetical in the middle of an argument – e.g.
(7) Bankers said [warrants for Hong Kong stocks are attractive] *because* [1,2 they give foreign investors]1, wary of volatility in the colony's stock market, [1 an opportunity to buy shares without taking too great a risk.]1,2

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Initial Experiments on PDTB [Prasad et al 2004]

To substantiate the theoretical claim of D-LTAG that some/many/all?
discourse adverbials are anaphoric, having a different patterns of arguments
than structural connectives (coordinate and subordinate conjunctions and
subordinators).
To examine the order in which arguments commonly appear with different
structural connectives.

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Arg1: Distribution by Adverbial

Adv	SS	PS	PP	NC	Total
Nevertheless	9.7%	54.8%	9.7%	25.8%	31
Otherwise	11.1%	77.8%	5.6%	5.6%	18
As a result	4.8%	69.8%	7.9%	19%	63
Therefore	55%	35%	5%	5%	20
Instead	22.7%	63.9%	2.1%	11.3%	97
Total	41	144	12	33	229

course adverbials pattern differently from coordinate & subordinate
conjunctions and from one another.

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Discourse Adverbials: Arg1 Location

Arg1 appears in:

- the same sentence as the adverbial (SS): main clause, complement clause, subordinate clause, relative clause, VP conjunction.
- the (immediately) previous sentence (PS)
- the (immediately) previous multi-sentence span (PP)
- one or more non-contiguous sentences (NC).

SS	PS	PP	NC	Total
41 (17.9%)	144 (62.9%)	12 (5.2%)	33 (14.4%)	229

NC location of Arg1 is only compatible with the idea that discourse adverbials get
their arguments *anaphorically* rather than syntactically.

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Subordinate Conjunctions: Relative Order of Arguments

Relevant for NLG: placement of connectives [Walker, Prasad & Stent 2003]

2408 tokens: *when, because, even though, although, so that*

- Arg1 < Arg2
Mr. Lothson of Paine Webber said the company's sales pace has been picking
up largely because the effect of unfavorable exchange rates has been easing.
- Arg2 < Arg1
Because they want a truck that is "Texas tough", the commercial concludes,
"Texans drive Chevy".

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Relative Order of Arguments: Results

Conn	Arg1-Arg2	54%	46%	1010
When	Arg2-Arg1	90%	10%	915
Because		75%	25%	103
Although		37%	63%	347
So that		100%	0%	33
total		1606 (67%)	802 (33%)	2408

ally-based annotation can reveal distinctions that may be hidden with

act RST relation annotation.

in the RST corpus, *even though* and *although* occur in *concessive* relations.

Williams & Reiter (2003) found that 77% of *concessives* in the corpus were in Arg2-Arg1 order and took it as the preferred pattern for NLG.

This ignores the very different patterning of *even though* and *although*.

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Summary

- If a form has multiple functions (DN vs. anaphoric, coreference vs. event reference), makes sense for algorithm to try to distinguish them before or during further processing, since the different functions are likely to have different properties.
- Reusable corpora are expensive, but still worth the time and funds to create them.
- Since the more data, the better, both for evaluation and training, it is worth spending some effort thinking about how to reduce the manual effort needed to create Gold Standard corpora.

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