

Top-down Chart Parsing: the Earley algorithm

Data Structures and Algorithms for Computational Linguistics III (ISCL-BA-07)

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Parsing so far

- We can formulate parsing as
 - Top-down: begin with the start symbol, try to *produce* the input string to be parsed
 - Bottom up: begin with the input, and try to *reduce* it to the start symbol
- Another aspect of a parser is its directionality. Two choices are:
 - Directional: parses processes the input left to right (right to left is also possible, but rarely used)
 - Non-directional: order is not important, typically require all input to be in memory before processing

Top-down parsing as search

the cat bites a dog

S → NP VP
NP → Det N
VP → V NP
VP → V
Det → a
Det → the
N → cat
N → dog
V → bites

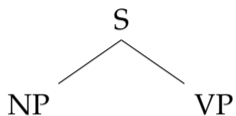
Top-down parsing as search

S

the cat bites a dog

S	→	NP VP
NP	→	Det N
VP	→	V NP
VP	→	V
Det	→	a
Det	→	the
N	→	cat
N	→	dog
V	→	bites

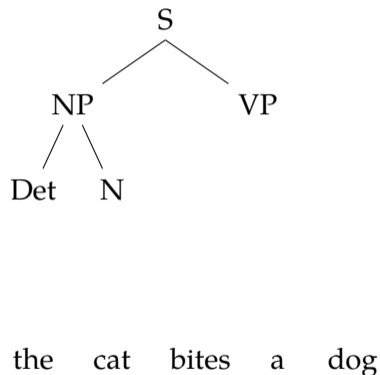
Top-down parsing as search



the cat bites a dog

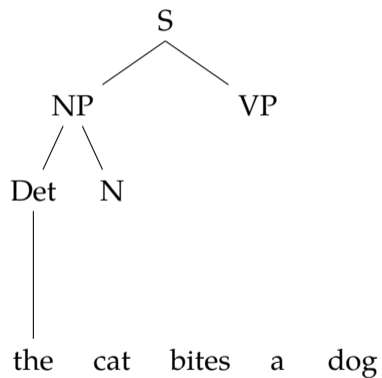
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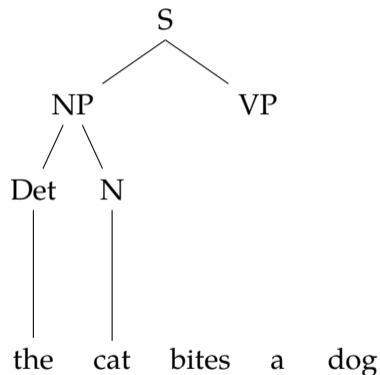
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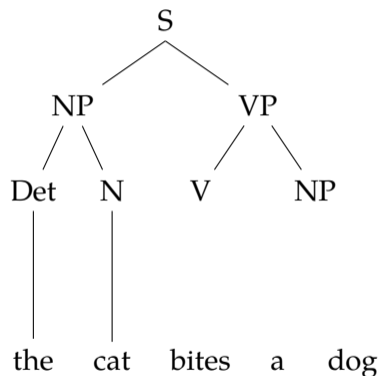
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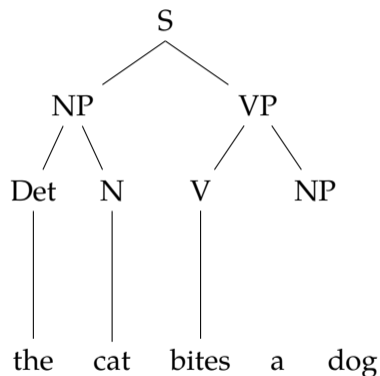
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Top-down parsing as search



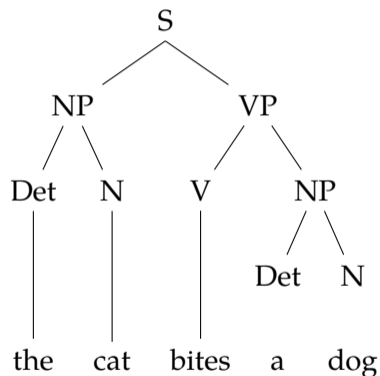
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Top-down parsing as search



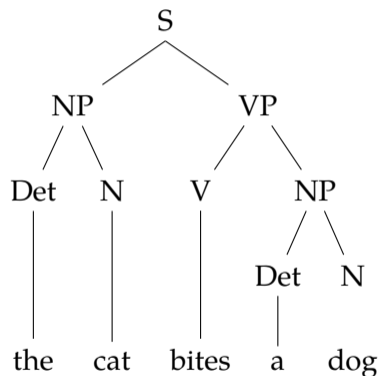
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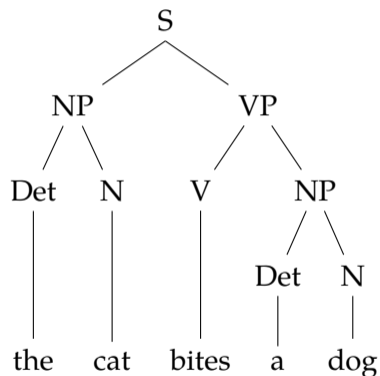
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Top-down parsing as search



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Top-down parsing as search



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Earley algorithm

- Earley algorithm is a top down (and left-to-right) parsing algorithm
- It allows arbitrary CFGs
- Keeps record of constituents that are
 - predicted using the grammar (top-down)
 - in-progress with partial evidence
 - completed based on input seen so farat every position in the input string
- Time complexity is $O(n^3)$

Earley chart entries (states or items)

Earley chart entries are CF rules with a 'dot' on the RHS representing the state of the rule

- $A \rightarrow \bullet\alpha[i, i]$ predicted without any evidence (yet)
- $A \rightarrow \alpha \bullet \beta[i, j]$ partially matched
- $A \rightarrow \alpha\beta \bullet [i, j]$ completed, the non-terminal A is found in the given span

Earley algorithm: an informal sketch

1. Start at position 0, predict S
2. Predict all possible states (rules that apply)
3. Read a word
4. Update the table, advance the dot if possible
5. Go to step 2
6. If we have a completed S production at the end of the input, the input is recognized

Earley algorithm: three operations

Predictor adds all rules that are possible at the given state

Completer adds states from the earlier chart entries that match the completed state to the chart entry being processed, and advances their dot

Scanner adds a completed state to the next chart entry if the current category is a pre-terminal symbol, and the terminal symbol (word) matches

Earley parsing example (chart[0])

0	she	1	saw	2	a	3	duck	4
state	rule			position		operation		
0	$\gamma \rightarrow \bullet S$			[0,0]		initialization		
1	$S \rightarrow \bullet NP VP$			[0,0]		predictor		
2	$S \rightarrow \bullet Aux NP VP$			[0,0]		predictor		
3	$NP \rightarrow \bullet Det N$			[0,0]		predictor		
4	$NP \rightarrow \bullet NP PP$			[0,0]		predictor		
5	$NP \rightarrow \bullet Prn$			[0,0]		predictor		

Note: the chart[0] is independent of the input.

$S \rightarrow NP VP$
 $S \rightarrow Aux NP VP$
 $NP \rightarrow Det N$
 $NP \rightarrow Prn$
 $NP \rightarrow NP PP$
 $VP \rightarrow V NP$
 $VP \rightarrow V$
 $VP \rightarrow VP PP$
 $PP \rightarrow Prp NP$
 $N \rightarrow duck$
 $N \rightarrow park$
 $V \rightarrow duck$
 $V \rightarrow ducks$
 $V \rightarrow saw$
 $Prn \rightarrow she | her$
 $Prp \rightarrow in | with$
 $Det \rightarrow a | the$
 $Aux \rightarrow does | has$

Earley parsing example (chart[1])

0	she	1	saw	2	a	3	duck	4
state	rule	position	operation					
6	Prn → she ●	[0,1]	scanner					
7	NP → Prn ●	[0,1]	completer					
8	S → NP ●VP	[0,1]	completer					
9	NP → NP ●PP	[0,1]	completer					
10	VP → ●V NP	[1,1]	predictor					
11	VP → ●V	[1,1]	predictor					
12	VP → ●VP PP	[1,1]	predictor					
13	PP → ●Prp NP	[1,1]	predictor					

S → NP VP
 S → Aux NP VP
 NP → Det N
 NP → Prn
 NP → NP PP
 VP → V NP
 VP → V
 VP → VP PP
 PP → Prp NP
 N → duck
 N → park
 V → duck
 V → ducks
 V → saw
 Prn → she | her
 Prp → in | with
 Det → a | the
 Aux → does | has

Earley parsing example (chart[2])

0	she	1	saw	2	a	3	duck	4
state	rule	position	operation					
14	V → saw ●	[1,2]	scanner					
15	VP → V ●NP	[1,2]	completer					
16	VP → V ●	[1,2]	completer					
17	S → NP VP ●	[0,2]	completer					
18	NP → ●Det N	[2,2]	predictor					
19	NP → ●NP PP	[2,2]	predictor					
20	NP → ●Prn	[2,2]	predictor					

S → NP VP
 S → Aux NP VP
 NP → Det N
 NP → Prn
 NP → NP PP
 VP → V NP
 VP → V
 VP → VP PP
 PP → Prp NP
 N → duck
 N → park
 V → duck
 V → ducks
 V → saw
 Prn → she | her
 Prp → in | with
 Det → a | the
 Aux → does | has

Earley parsing example (chart[3])

0	she	1	saw	2	a	3	duck	4
state	rule	position	operation					
21	Det → a •	[2,3]	scanner					
22	NP → Det •N	[2,3]	completer					

S → NP VP
 S → Aux NP VP
 NP → Det N
 NP → Prn
 NP → NP PP
 VP → V NP
 VP → V
 VP → VP PP
 PP → Prp NP
 N → duck
 N → park
 V → duck
 V → ducks
 V → saw
 Prn → she | her
 Prp → in | with
 Det → a | the
 Aux → does | has

Earley parsing example (chart[4])

0	she	1	saw	2	a	3	duck	4
state	rule	position	operation					
23	N → duck •	[3,4]	scanner					
24	V → duck •	[3,4]	scanner					
25	NP → Det N •	[2,4]	completer					
26	VP → V NP •	[1,4]	completer					
27	S → NP VP •	[0,4]	completer					

S → NP VP
 S → Aux NP VP
 NP → Det N
 NP → Prn
 NP → NP PP
 VP → V NP
 VP → V
 VP → VP PP
 PP → Prp NP
 N → duck
 N → park
 V → duck
 V → ducks
 V → saw
 Prn → she | her
 Prp → in | with
 Det → a | the
 Aux → does | has

Earley parsing: summary

- Complexity (asymptotic) is the same as CKY
 - time complexity : $O(n^3)$
 - space complexity: $O(n^2)$
- Our example shows recognition, we need to maintain back links for parsing
- Again, the Earley chart stores a parse forest compactly, but extracting all trees may require exponential time

Summary

- The Earley parser is a top-down parser with bottom-up filtering (or, you can also view it the other way around)
- The parser improves over a backtracking parser by
 - dynamic programming: not re-computing the subtrees
 - filtering: not generating hypotheses (predictor) that cannot match at a given input position
- It can process any CFG (no need for CNF)
- There is a nice relation between CKY and Earley: you can view Earley as binarizing the grammar (converting to CNF) 'on the fly'

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Next:

- Dependency parsing
- Reading suggestion: Jurafsky and Martin (2009, draft chapter 14)

An exercise

Construct the CKY and Earley charts for the sentence below

The duck she saw is in the park

Recommended grammar:

S → NP VP	PP → Prp NP
NP → Det N	N → park
NP → Prn	N → duck
NP → NP PP	V → is
NP → NP S	V → saw
VP → V NP	Prn → she
VP → V	Prp → in
VP → VP PP	Det → the

Acknowledgments, references, additional reading material



Jurafsky, Daniel and James H. Martin (2009). *Speech and Language Processing: An Introduction to Natural Language Processing, Computational Linguistics, and Speech Recognition*. second edition. Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0-13-504196-3.