

# Applying Robust Semantics

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# Outline.

Introduction to Robust Semantics.

Flat semantics and DELPH-IN

Operations on RMRS

Generation and Idioms

QA and semantic pattern matching

Conclusions

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## Applications: 1970s-1980s.

- ▶ Natural language interfaces to databases and knowledge bases:
  - ▶ Who had the highest sales figures in June 1982?
  - ▶ Is there a doctor on board the Vincennes?
- ▶ Exploit the limited domain: small lexicon, link to domain concepts, domain-specific ambiguity resolution. Database as denotation.

## Applications: late 1980s onwards

- ▶ Information management:
  - ▶ Web search: return full documents (display snippets), generally little language processing.
  - ▶ Information Extraction (IE): relatively unrestricted text, specific types of information (e.g., company takeovers, terrorist incidents), instantiate fixed templates.
  - ▶ Question Answering (QA): general queries, match query to text/web.
- ▶ Broad-coverage, very shallow processing, mostly no compositional semantics.

## Why use semantics in information management?

- ▶ Enables abstraction:
  - ▶ Paper 1: The synthesis of 2,8-dimethyl-6H,12H-5,11-methanodibenzo[b,f][1,5]diazocine (Troger's base) from p-toluidine and of two Troger's base analogs from other anilines
  - ▶ Paper 2: ... Tröger's base (TB) ... The TBs are usually prepared from para-substituted anilines
- ▶ Inference: e.g., search for papers describing Tröger's base syntheses which **don't** involve anilines?
- ▶ Domain and application independence.

## Broad-coverage computational compositional semantics: present day.

- ▶ High-throughput parsers with some form of semantic output: CCG, RASP, ENJU, XLE . . . ERG/PET (medium throughput) . . .
- ▶ Effective statistical techniques for parse ranking (for syntactically different structures).
- ▶ Robust entailment as a common basis for applications.
- ▶ Links to ontologies/semantic web.
- ▶ More ‘stuff’ online, increased need for precision.

## What is Compositional Semantics?

Topics include:

- ▶ Predicate-argument structure (nouns, adjectives as well as verbs).  
Scopal (e.g., *probably*) vs non-scopal (e.g., *quickly*).
- ▶ Construction semantics: relative clauses, appositives, tag questions, pseudo-partitives . . .
- ▶ Tense, aspect, distributivity, generics vs individual reference, mass/count.
- ▶ Non-compositional multi-word expressions.
- ▶ Maybe: derivational morphology, sense extension.

**Not: meaning of open-class words.**



## Compositional Semantics: working definition

Meaning information that can be associated with syntax and morphology.

- ▶ Fully identified (for English): Predicate-argument structure, modifier scope, some constructions.
- ▶ Partially identified: quantifier scope, compound nouns, tense, aspect, massness, genericity, sense extension.

Partial information, e.g. genericity:

*Brontosaurus ate half a ton of vegetation a day*  
*the Brontosaurus ate a sailor, but it was a herbivore*  
*your brontosaurus ate my palm tree*

## Implications of broad-coverage processing for computational semantics.

- ▶ Semantic processing is relatively shallow. No underlying knowledge base for disambiguation.
- ▶ Detailed lexical information is not available. At best, irregular morphology, syntactic subcategorization for frequent word senses, WordNet and/or FrameNet. Incomplete/absent: multiword expressions, mass terms, verb aspect, pseudo-partitive constructions . . .
- ▶ Support inter-sentential anaphora/text structure.
- ▶ Avoid semantics multiplying readings: underspecification.

## Underspecification and Sudoku solving

			7					8
		9					2	
	5			3			9	
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			

# Solving.

			7					8
		9					2	
	5			3			9	
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			

## Possibility 1.

			7					8
		9					2	7
	5			3			9	
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			

## Possibility 2.

			7					8
		9					2	
	5			3			9	7
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			

# Underspecification.

			7					8
		9					2	7
	5			3			9	7
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			

## Inference on underspecified form.

			7					8
		9					2	7
	5			3			9	7
8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4		
7					1			



## Inference on underspecified form.

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8					2			
		6				7		
			4					1
	3			9			6	
	2					4	7	
7					1			

## Some examples of underspecification in computational semantics.

- ▶ Quantifier scope: single underspecified reading from each syntactic analysis.
- ▶ Genericity, massness, aspect.
- ▶ Compound nominal relations: general relationship.
- ▶ Prepositional phrase attachment: limit syntactic ambiguity.
- ▶ Word senses: hierarchy of word senses.
- ▶ Feature values: hierarchy of values. Underspecification for morphology vs semantically coherent classes.

## Inference and robust semantics

- ▶ Inference motivates use of semantic representations.
- ▶ BUT:
  - ▶ Inference on underspecified representations?
  - ▶ Higher-order constructs?
  - ▶ Limited speed of theorem provers.
  - ▶ No closed world assumption (in contrast to database query).
  - ▶ **Not robust to missing information.**
- ▶ SO: pattern matching operations on semantics ...

## Inference and robust semantics

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- ▶ SO: pattern matching operations on semantics ...

## Applying robust semantics in DELPH-IN

Related work: PARC/Powerset, Moldovan et al, Bos et al. etc

This talk:

- ▶ MRS/RMRS approach to semantic representation.
- ▶ Abstract operations.
- ▶ Various applications.
- ▶ Relationship to ‘proper’ inference.

Semantic operations on (R)MRS have evolved and expanded:  
emphasis on practical utility, not theory.

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## DELPH-IN: Deep Linguistic Processing using HPSG

- ▶ Informal collaboration on tools and grammars: see <http://www.delph-in.net/>
- ▶ Large grammars for English, German and Japanese; medium/growing for Spanish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Korean, French. Many small grammars.
- ▶ Common semantic framework: Minimal Recursion Semantics (MRS) and Robust MRS. RMRS also from shallower parsing, chunking, POS tagging.
- ▶ Parsing and generation (realization), integrated shallower processing.
- ▶ Grammar Matrix: framework/starter kit for the development of grammars for diverse languages.

## Some recent projects using MRS/RMRS

- ▶ DeepThought: Information Extraction, email response
- ▶ LOGON: Norwegian-English MT (semantic transfer)
- ▶ SciBorg: IE from Chemistry texts
- ▶ Reasoning about meetings (Schlangen et al, 2003)
- ▶ Dridan (2006), Dridan and Bond (2006): Question Answering (also Watson et al (2003))
- ▶ QUETAL: QA from structured knowledge (Frank et al)
- ▶ Herbelot and Copestake (2006): Ontology extraction from Wikipedia
- ▶ Nichols, Bond, Flickinger (2005): Ontology extraction from MRDs



## Semantic representation: MRS

The mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature.

```
< l3:_the_q(x5,h6,h4), l7:_mixture_n(x5),  
l9:_allow_v_1(e2,u11,x5,h10), l13:_warm_v_1(e14,x5),  
l13:_to_p(e15,e14,x16), l17:udef_q(x16,h18,h19),  
l20:compound(e22,x16,x21), l23:udef_q(x21,h24,h25),  
l26:_room_n(x21), l20:_temperature_n(x16) >  
< qeq(h6,l7), qeq(h18,l20), qeq(h24,l26), qeq(h10,l13) >
```

## MRS: main features

- ▶ Flat: list of EPs (each with label), list of qeqs.
- ▶ Underspecified quantifier scope: labels and holes, linked with qeqs (equality modulo quantifiers).  
**l9**:\_allow\_v\_1(e2,u11,x5,**h10**), **qeq**(**h10**,**l13**),  
**l13**:\_warm\_v\_1(e14,x5)
- ▶ Conjunction from modification etc indicated by shared labels: **l13**:\_warm\_v\_1(e14,x5), **l13**:\_to\_p(e15,e14,x16)
- ▶ Lexical predicates (leading underscore): lexeme, coarse sense (POS), fine sense.
- ▶ Construction predicates (e.g., compound).
- ▶ Sorted variables: tense, etc (and simple information structure).

## One of the scoped forms

The mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature.

```
_the_q(x5,_mixture_n(x5),  
_allow_v_1(e2,u11,x5,  
  udef(x21,_room_n((x21),  
    udef(x16,compound(e22,x16,x21) ^ _temperature_n(x16),  
      _warm_v_1(e14,x5) ^ _to_p(e15,e14,x16))))))
```

## Semantic representation: RMRS

The mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature.

```

⟨ l3:a1:_the_q(x5), l7:a2:_mixture_n(x5), l9:a3:_allow_v_1(e2),
  l13:a5:_warm_v_1(e14), l13:a6:_to_p(e15), l17:a7:udef_q(x16),
  l20:a8:compound(e22), l23:a9:udef_q(x21),
  l26:a10:_room_n(x21), l20:a11:_temperature_n(x16)⟩
⟨ a1:RSTR(h6), a1:BODY(h4), a3:ARG2(x5), a3:ARG3(h10),
  a5:ARG1(x5), a6:ARG1(e14), a6:ARG2(x16), a7:RSTR(h18),
  a7:BODY(h19), a8:ARG1(x16), a8:ARG2(x21), a9:RSTR(h24),
  a9:BODY(h25) ⟩
⟨ qeq(h6,l7), qeq(h18,l20), qeq(h24,l26), qeq(h10,l13) ⟩

```

## MRS vs RMRS

- ▶ I9:\_allow\_v\_1(e2,u11,x5,h10) in MRS  
I9:**a3**:\_allow\_v\_1(e2), **a3**:ARG2(x5), **a3**:ARG3(h10) in RMRS.
- ▶ Further factorization: separation of arguments.
- ▶ All EPs have an **anchor** which relates args to EPs.
- ▶ RMRS can omit or underspecify ARGs: robust to missing lexical information.

## Character positions

The mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature.

```

⟨ l3:a1:_the_q(x5)⟨0, 3⟩, l7:a2:_mixture_n(x5)⟨4, 11⟩,
l9:a3:_allow_v_1(e2)⟨16, 23⟩, l13:a5:_warm_v_1(e14)⟨27, 31⟩,
l13:a6:_to_p(e15)⟨32, 34⟩, l17:a7:undef_q(x16)⟨35, 52⟩,
l20:a8:compound(e22)⟨35, 52⟩, l23:a9:undef_q(x21)⟨35, 52⟩,
l26:a10:_room_n(x21)⟨35, 39⟩, l20:a11:_temperature_n(x16)⟨40, 52⟩
⟨ a1:RSTR(h6), a1:BODY(h4), a3:ARG2(x5), a3:ARG3(h10),
a5:ARG1(x5), a6:ARG1(e14), a6:ARG2(x16), a7:RSTR(h18),
a7:BODY(h19), a8:ARG1(x16), a8:ARG2(x21), a9:RSTR(h24),
a9:BODY(h25) ⟩
⟨ qeq(h6,l7), qeq(h18,l20), qeq(h24,l26), qeq(h10,l13) ⟩

```

## RMRS from POS tagger

The mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature.

⟨ l1:a2:\_the\_q(x3), l4:a5:\_mixture\_n(x6), l7:a8:\_allow\_v(e9),  
l10:a11:\_warm\_v(e12), l13:a14:\_to\_p(e15),  
l16:a17:\_room\_n(x18), l19:a20:\_temperature\_n(x21)⟩

⟨

⟨

All variables distinct, no ARGs, no qeqs.

Chunker: equate nominal indices, etc.

## RMRS as semantic annotation of lexeme sequence.

- ▶ Annotate most lexemes with random label, anchor, arg0.  
Note: null semantics for some words, e.g., infinitival *to*.
- ▶ Partially disambiguate lexeme with n, v, q, p etc.
- ▶ Add sortal information to arg0.
- ▶ Implicit conjunction: add equalities between labels.
- ▶ Ordinary arguments: add ARGs (possibly underspecified) between anchors and arg0.
- ▶ Scopal arguments: add ARG plus qeq between anchors and labels.

Standoff annotation on original text via character positions.



## RMRS Elementary Predication

An RMRS EP contains:

1. the label of the EP: this is shared by other EPs to indicate implicit conjunction.
2. an anchor, not shared by any other EPs.
3. a relation
4. up to one argument of the relation (the arg0)

This is written as label:anchor:relation(arg0).

l13:a5:\_warm\_v\_1(e14)

l13:a6:\_to\_p(e15)

## RMRS ARGs

An RMRS ARG relation contains:

1. an anchor, which must also be the anchor of an EP.
2. an ARG relation, taken from a fixed set (here: ARG1, ARG2, ARG3, RSTR, BODY, plus the underspecified relations: ARG1-2, ARG1-3, ARG1-2, ARG2-3, ARGN).
3. exactly one argument. This must be 'grounded' by an EP: i.e., if it is a normal variable it must be the ARG0 of an EP, or if it is a hole, it must be related to the label of an EP by a qeq constraint.

a5:ARG1(x5), l13:a5:\_warm\_v\_1(e14), l7:a2:\_mixture\_n(x5)

## RMRS structures

An RMRS structure contains:

1. rels: The bag of EPs.
2. args: The bag of argument relations.
3. hcons: qeq constraints. A qeq relationship always holds between a hole in an argument relation and the label of an EP.

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## RMRS Matching

lb1:every\_q(x),  
lb1:RSTR(h9),  
lb1:BODY(h6),  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
lb1:RSTR(h8),  
lb1:BODY(h7),  
lb5:dog\_n\_1(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e),  
lb3:ARG1(x),  
lb3:ARG2(y)

lb1:every\_q(x),  
lb1:RSTR(h9),  
lb1:BODY(h6),  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
lb1:RSTR(h8),  
lb1:BODY(h7),  
lb5:dog\_n\_1(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e),  
lb3:ARG1(x),  
lb3:ARG2(y)

## RMRS Matching

lb1:every\_q(x),  
lb1:RSTR(h9),  
lb1:BODY(h6),  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
lb1:RSTR(h8),  
lb1:BODY(h7),  
lb5:dog\_n\_1(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e),  
lb3:ARG1(x),  
lb3:ARG2(y)

lb1:every\_q(x),  
lb1:RSTR(h9),  
lb1:BODY(h6),  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
lb1:RSTR(h8),  
lb1:BODY(h7),  
lb5:dog\_n(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e),  
lb3:ARG1-2(x),

## RMRS Matching

lb1:every\_q(x),  
lb1:RSTR(h9),  
lb1:BODY(h6),  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
lb1:RSTR(h8),  
lb1:BODY(h7),  
lb5:dog\_n\_1(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e),  
lb3:ARG1(x),  
lb3:ARG2(y)

lb1:every\_q(x),  
  
lb2:cat\_n(x),  
lb4:some\_q(y),  
  
lb5:dog\_n(y),  
lb3:chase\_v(e)

## ERG-RASP comparison 1

The window opened

Close Close All Print

h1	_____	h13
0->16:prpstn_m_rel(h1,h5)	_____	0->16:prpstn_m_rel(h13,h16)
qeq(h5,h11)	_____	qeq(h16,h11)
0->2:_the_q(h6,x9)	_____	0->2:_the_q(h1,x2)
RSTR(h6,h8)	_____	RSTR(h1,h8)
BODY(h6,h7)	_____	BODY(h1,h9)
qeq(h8,h10)	_____	qeq(h8,h3)
4->9:_window_n(h10,x9)	_____	4->9:_window_n(h3,x2)
11->16:_open_v_1(h11,e2)	_____	11->16:_open_v(h11,e12)
ARG1(h11,x9)	_____	ARG1(h11,x2)



## ERG-RASP comparison 2

Abrams intended to bark

Close Close All Print

h1 _____	h20 _____
0->22:prpstn_m_rel(h1,h5) _____	0->22:prpstn_m_rel(h20,h23) _____
qeq(h5,h11) _____	qeq(h23,h6) _____
0->5:proper_q_rel(h6,x7) _____	0->5:proper_q_rel(h1,x2) _____
RSTR(h6,h8) _____	RSTR(h1,h4) _____
BODY(h6,h9) _____	BODY(h1,h5) _____
qeq(h8,h10) _____	qeq(h4,h3) _____
0->5:named_rel(h10,x7) _____	0->5:named_rel(h3,x2) _____
CARG(h10,abrams) _____	CARG(h3,abrams) _____
7->14:_intend_v_subjseq(h11,e2) _____	7->14:_intend_v(h6,e7) _____
ARG1(h11,x7) _____	ARG1(h6,x2) _____
ARG2(h11,h12) _____	ARG2(h6,h12) _____
16->17:prpstn_m_rel(h12,h15) _____	16->22:prpstn_m_rel(h12,h15) _____
qeq(h15,h16) _____	qeq(h15,h10) _____
19->22:_bark_v(h16,e17) _____	19->22:_bark_v(h10,e11) _____
ARG1(h16,x7) _____	ARG1(h10,u16) _____

## RMRS EP matching

An EP1 matches EP2 if:

1. the relation associated with EP1 is compatible with the relation associated with EP2. 'compatibility': partial order on relations.
2. the  $arg0$  associated with EP1 is compatible with the  $arg0$  associated with EP2 (including sortal properties)
3. Neither of the anchors are already matched.

If EP1 matches EP2, variable equivalences are:

$l_1/l_2, a_1/a_2, arg0_1/arg0_2$ .

Full set of variable equivalences from matching two RMRSs:  
RMRS1/RMRS2.

## RMRS ARG matching

Matching argument relations depends on RMRS1/RMRS2.  
ARG-REL1 matches ARG-REL2 iff:

1. the anchor of ARG-REL1 is bound to the anchor of ARG-REL2 in RMRS1/RMRS2
2. and, if the argument of ARG-REL1 is a normal variable, it is bound to the argument of ARG-REL2 in RMRS1/RMRS2
3. or, if the argument of ARG-REL1 is a hole, it is  $\text{qeq}$  a label which is bound to a label  $l_2$  in RMRS1/RMRS2 such that the argument of ARG-REL2 is  $\text{qeq}$   $l_2$
4. and the relation in ARG-REL1 is compatible with the relation in ARG-REL2

## RMRS matching

RMRSs R1 and R2 match iff:

- ▶ each EP in R1 matches an EP in R2
- ▶ each EP in R2 matches an EP in R1
- ▶ each argument relation in R1 matches an argument relation in R2
- ▶ each argument relation in R2 matches an argument relation in R1

(BODY arguments are generally ignored: unscoped representations)

## RMRS matching variants

- ▶ RMRSs may be checked for subsumption rather than compatibility: e.g., idiom patterns.
- ▶ RMRS patterns may be used rather than matching two RMRSs derived by a grammar: e.g., information extraction.
- ▶ Unmatched EPS allowed on one or both sides: e.g., QA.
- ▶ Robust weighted match: score according to which EPS match and whether their arguments match: e.g., QA.
- ▶ A match may signal some action: e.g., ‘null semantic items’ for generation.

Matching is a component of merging and ‘munging’.

## RMRS merging

- ▶ Two matching RMRSs may be merged: conjunction.
- ▶ Merging for patching up a partial deep analysis: Heart of Gold (Ulrich Schäfer).
- ▶ Packing partially compatible RMRSs into a lattice.
- ▶ Merging uniqueness for parse results guaranteed by ordering of EPs in analysis.

## (R)MRS ‘munging’

- ▶ Rules for mapping between (R)MRSs
- ▶ Originally a hack for Verbmobil, later found many uses . . .
- ▶ Rules: input, output, context (all optional).  
If the input matches part of an MRS, and the context also matches, then the input is converted to the output.
- ▶ Each rule applied multiple times to one MRS, rules applied in a sequence in a ruleset, no reapplication of rulesets.
- ▶ Refined by Stephan Oepen for LOGON semantic transfer: also monolingual paraphrase, mapping input to a domain-specific representation (e.g., Schlangen et al).

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## Generation / realization

Generate all and only the strings with ‘compatible’ semantics:

- ▶ If LF1 is generated by grammar G from string S, and LF2 is logically equivalent to LF1, then a realiser working with grammar G should accept LF2 and produce string S
- ▶ Unfortunately impossible for even first order predicate calculus (pointed out by Shieber)
- ▶ RMRS matching criterion instead: output has same predications, equivalence of ‘grammatical’ conjunction. Broaden this by underspecification.

## Lexicalist generation (simplified!)

[a(y), consultant(y), german(y), every(x), manager(x),  
interview(e,x,y)]

1. For each elementary predication, find a corresponding lexical entry.
2. Set the argument positions in the lexical entry. to constant values - e.g., interview(c2,c1,c3), manager(c1), consultant(c3), german(c3), a(c3), every(c1)  
This means that unification ensures that the predicate-argument structure is correct.
3. Generate by parsing different orders of lexical items.

## Generation chart (simplified!)

1. no overlap: check as the edges are constructed that EPs are only used once
2. completeness check at the end
3. some restrictions on the grammar:
  - ▶ daughters may not overlap — e.g., cannot have semantics constructed by means of multiple inheritance between types contributed from two sources
  - ▶ monotonicity: none of the components may be removed when constructing a phrase

## Null semantics in generation

- ▶ Some lexical entries (e.g., infinitival *to*, expletive *there*) have no associated EP
- ▶ introduce on the basis of null semantics rules triggered by match on the input MRS
- ▶ `l:a:_be_v_there_rel(e) -> "there_expl"`  
where "there\_expl" is a lexical entry identifier.

## Idioms

- ▶ Most idioms are ‘compositional’: meaning of the idiomatic phrase can be treated as composed of the meaning of the component parts, with weird senses.
- ▶ *take heart, spill beans, cat out of (the) bag*. e.g., *spill the beans* corresponds roughly to *reveal the secrets*.

- ▶ Syntactic variation:

*We take considerable heart from the knowledge*  
... (from BNC)

- ▶ Idiomatic senses as normal lexical entries with use constrained by semantic patterns acting as root conditions:  
l:a:\_take\_v\_i(e), ARG2(a,x), l1:a1:\_heart\_n\_i(x)

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## Questions and answers: QA, NLID etc

A valid answer should entail the query (with suitable interpretation of *wh*-terms etc).

*Is a dog barking?*

$\exists x[\text{dog}'(x) \wedge \text{bark}'(x)]$

*A dog is barking* entails *A dog is barking*

*Rover is barking* and *Rover is a dog* entails *A dog is barking*.

$\text{bark}'(\text{Rover}) \wedge \text{dog}'(\text{Rover})$  entails  $\exists x[\text{dog}'(x) \wedge \text{bark}'(x)]$

*which dog is barking?*

$\text{bark}'(\text{Rover}) \wedge \text{dog}'(\text{Rover})$  entails  $\exists x[\text{dog}'(x) \wedge \text{bark}'(x)]$

Bind query term to answer.

## QA example 1

### Example

What eats jellyfish?



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What eats jellyfish?

Pattern matching on RMRS:

[ a:eat(e), ARG1(a,x), ARG2(a,y), jellyfish(y) ]

So won't match on *jellyfish eat fish*.

# What eats jellyfish?

## Example

Turtles eat jellyfish and they have special hooks in their throats to help them swallow these slimy animals.

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Turtles eat jellyfish and they have special hooks in their throats to help them swallow these slimy animals.

Match on [ a:eat(e), ARG1(a,x), ARG2(a,y), jellyfish(y) ]

A logically valid answer which entails the query since the conjunct can be ignored.

## What eats jellyfish?

### Example

Turtles eat jellyfish and they have special hooks in their throats to help them swallow these slimy animals.



## Turtles again



## What eats jellyfish?

### Example

Sea turtles, ocean sunfish (Mola mola) and blue rockfish all are able to eat large jellyfish, seemingly without being affected by the nematocysts.

## What eats jellyfish?

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Sea turtles, ocean sunfish (Mola mola) and blue rockfish all are able to eat large jellyfish, seemingly without being affected by the nematocysts.





## What eats jellyfish?

### Example

Sea turtles, ocean sunfish (Mola mola) and blue rockfish all are able to eat large jellyfish, seemingly without being affected by the nematocysts.

Pattern matching on RMRS:

[ a:eat(e), ARG1(a,x), ARG2(a,y), large(y), jellyfish(y) ]

*eat large jellyfish* entails *eat jellyfish* (because *large* is intersective)

## What eats jellyfish?

### Example

Also, open ocean-dwelling snails called *Janthina* and even some seabirds have been known to eat jellyfish.

## What eats jellyfish?

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## What eats jellyfish?

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[ a1:know(e), ARG2(a1,h1), qeq(h1,lb), lb:a:eat(e), ARG1(a,x), ARG2(a,y), jellyfish(y) ]

Logically valid if *know* is taken as truth preserving.

$\forall P \forall y [know(y, P) \implies P]$

Axioms like this required for logically valid entailment: missing axiom would cause failure to match.

## QA Example 2

### Example

What is the largest town in Cornwall?

Interface to database of Cornish towns could use numerical population values and calculate this.

QA: assumption is the data is directly available in some text (no closed world assumption)

## QA Example 2

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QA: assumption is the data is directly available in some text (no closed world assumption)

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*St Austell is Cornwall's largest town and a centre of the china clay industry.*

Query: [ named(x,"Cornwall"), in(e,x,y), large(e,y), superl(e1,e), town(y) ]

Answer: [ named(x,"Cornwall"), poss(e,y,x), large(e,y), superl(e1,e), town(y) ]

So strict match misses here where word match would work.

Actual QA experiments: weighted match. Closed-class words and construction relations are given less weight than matches on EPS derived from lexemes.

Better alternative long term: set of valid equivalence rules (poss as underspecified relation).

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*In spite of its city statue (sic), Truro is not the largest town in Cornwall; there are several larger agglomerations.*

Negation: like *know* in earlier example, but here simple pattern matching gets it wrong.

Contexts which **block** match (versus axioms which allow entailment for theorem proving).



## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*Penzance is the largest town in west Cornwall.*

west can be treated as intersective, but this does not imply

*Penzance is the largest town in Cornwall.*

Superlatives require a notion of the comparison set (not in current ERG/RMRS representation).

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

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west can be treated as intersective, but this does not imply

*Penzance is the largest town in Cornwall.*

Superlatives require a notion of the comparison set (not in current ERG/RMRS representation).

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*St Austell is the largest town in Cornwall, in terms of population.*

Dimensionality of adjectives: this is hard!

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*Also at [URL], St Austell is said to be the largest town, however the population figure is doubtful.* (from Wikipedia Portal talk)

Contexts which might block an inference may be indefinitely far away in a document, maybe even in a different document.

Cf scientific texts: want to extract citations which contradict a paper. Trustworthiness of documents: implausible can be obtained by detailed textual analysis with current technology, but approximations.

## What is the largest town in Cornwall?

*Also at [URL], St Austell is said to be the largest town, however the population figure is doubtful.* (from Wikipedia Portal talk)

Contexts which might block an inference may be indefinitely far away in a document, maybe even in a different document. Cf scientific texts: want to extract citations which contradict a paper. Trustworthiness of documents: implausible can be obtained by detailed textual analysis with current technology, but approximations.

## Matching in QA: Summary

- ▶ Word overlap: no account of the context of the query words in the answer.
- ▶ Simple RMRS matching: context relating the query words, but no context from the remainder of the sentence.
- ▶ Refined RMRS matching: check for specific types of context, such as negation.
- ▶ Full sentence-based entailment takes into account the sentence context, but not document context or inter-document context.

RMRS: augment language with explicit semantics to different extents.

Robust matching: augment bag-of-words technique to different extents.

# Outline.

Introduction to Robust Semantics.

Flat semantics and DELPH-IN

Operations on RMRS

Generation and Idioms

QA and semantic pattern matching

**Conclusions**

## The Semantic Web

- ▶ Like NL search, QA etc, semantic web querying:
  - ▶ cannot rely on a closed world assumption
  - ▶ requires mapping between representations
- ▶ Claim: language processing will soon just be needed for old texts. All new publication will use semantic markup.
- ▶ But: agreement on semantic markup languages is limited. Even scientific publishing is not simply about facts.
- ▶ ‘Information Layer’ (Spärck Jones 2007): connection via words may be good enough for many tasks.
- ▶ Semantic web markup best seen as an addition to natural language, not a replacement.  
Computational semantics: enrich texts to make aspects of meaning more accessible to subsequent processing.



## Concluding comments

- ▶ Computational semantic representations can be robust to missing information, especially missing lexicon.
- ▶ Flat, ‘surfacy’ representations: more robustness, easier processing, semantics as annotation of natural language rather than replacement for it.
- ▶ Semantics is useful in applications even without ‘proper’ inference. Semantic operations can be robust to missing ‘axioms’.
- ▶ Going deeper:
  - ▶ Lexical semantics: symbolic relationships between predicates, vector space model of predicates.
  - ▶ Discourse relations, anaphora, context.

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