

# Learning Semantic Sub-graphs for Document Summarization

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## Abstract

In this paper we present a method for summarizing document by creating a semantic graph of the original document and identifying the substructure of such a graph that can be used to extract sentences for a document summary. We start with deep syntactic analysis of the text and, for each sentence, extract logical form triples, subject–predicate–object. We then apply cross-sentence pronoun resolution, co-reference resolution, and semantic normalization to refine the set of triples and merge them into a semantic graph. This procedure is applied to both documents and corresponding summary extracts. We train linear Support Vector Machine on the logical form triples to learn how to extract triples that belong to sentences in document summaries. The classifier is then used for automatic creation of document summaries of test data. Our experiments with the DUC 2002 data show that increasing the set of attributes to include semantic properties and topological graph properties of logical triples yields statistically significant improvement of the micro-average F1 measure for the extracted summaries. We also observe that attributes describing various aspects of semantic graph are weighted highly by SVM in the learned model.

## 1. Introduction

Document summarization refers to the task of creating document surrogates that are smaller in size but retain various characteristics of the original document, depending on the intended use. While abstracts created by authors or trained professionals involve rewriting of text, automatic summarization of documents has been focused on extracting sentences from text [5, 10, 13, 15] so that the overall summary satisfies various criteria: optimal reduction of text for use in text indexing and retrieval [3], coverage of document themes [14], and similar. The objective of automatically creating professional abstracts of documents has been also pursued. In particular, the Document Understanding Conference [4] provides experimentation framework and a forum for exchanging research ideas and results on that particular topic.

Automated summarization is often approached in two phases. First, key textual elements, e.g., keywords, concepts, and concept relations, are extracted from the text using linguistic and statistical analysis. These are then used to select sentences from the text, enforcing various requirements on coverage and coherence of extracts [15, 16]. More sophisticated approaches involve generation of text based on textual units identified in the first phase.

In this paper we are primarily concerned with the first phase, i.e., identification of textual elements for use in extracting summaries. We start from the assumption that capturing semantic structure of a document is essential for summarization. We thus create semantic representations of the document, visualized as semantic graphs, and learn the model to extract sub-structures that could be used in document extracts. The basic elements of our semantic graphs are logical form triples, subject–predicate–object. We characterize each triple by a rich set of linguistic, statistical, and graph attributes and train linear SVM classifier to identify those triples that could be used for sentence extraction. Our experiments show that characteristics of the semantic graphs, obtained through sophisticated linguistic analyses, are most prominent

attributes in the learnt SVM model. We also show that including the rich set of linguistic attributes increased the performance of the summarization model.

In the following sections we describe the procedure that we use for generating semantic graphs. We then discuss the experiment set up and the results of the sub-graph learning experiments and conclude by outlining the future work.

## 2. Problem Statement

The task of automated document summarization is to produce a shorter version of an original document. As document summaries, in form of abstracts, have been generated by authors and trained professionals, it seems most natural to try to model human abstracting. However, evaluation of such models is difficult because of the text generation aspects. In this study we thus focus on learning models for extracting rather than generating summaries from document text.

We apply machine learning algorithms to capture characteristics of human extracted summary sentences. In contrast to related studies, which typically rely on a minimal understanding of the semantic structure of documents [5, 10], we start with deep syntactic analysis of the text. We extract elementary syntactic structures from individual sentences in the form of logical form triples, i.e., subject–predicate–object triples, and use semantic properties of nodes in the triples to build semantic graphs for both documents and corresponding summaries. We expect that extracted summaries would capture essential semantic relations within the document and thus their structures could be found within the document semantic graphs. We reduce the problem of summarization to acquiring machine learning models for mapping between the document graph and the graph of a summary. This means we learn models for extracting sub-structures from document semantic graphs which are characteristic of human selected summaries. We use logical form triples as basic features and apply Support Vector Machines to learn the summarization model.

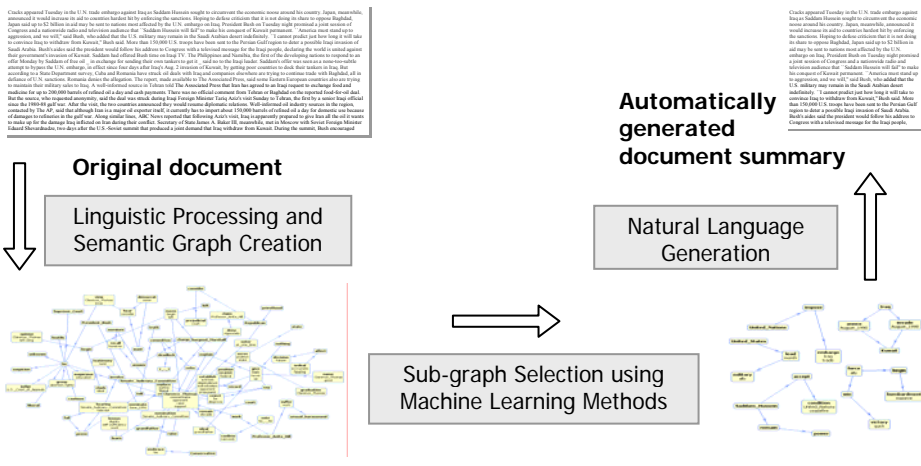


Figure 1. Summarization procedure based on semantic structure analysis.

### 3. Semantic Graph Generation

Our approach to generating semantic representations of documents and summaries involves five phases, each described in more details in the sections below:

- Deep syntactic analysis – We apply deep syntactic analysis to document sentences, using NLPWin linguistic tool [3], and extract logical form triples
- Co-reference resolution – We identify co-references for named entities through surface form matching and text layout analysis, thus aiming at consolidating expressions that refer to the same named entity
- Pronominal reference resolution – We then use NLPWin syntactic and semantic tags to trace and resolve pronominal references as they appear in the text
- Semantic normalization – We expand terms in the logical form triples using WordNet semantic network in order to normalize expressions that refer to the same concepts
- Semantic graph analysis – We merge the logical form triples into a semantic graph and analyze the graph properties.

#### 3.1. Linguistic Analysis

For linguistic analysis of text we use Microsoft’s NLPWin natural language processing tool. NLPWin first segments the text into individual sentences, converts sentence text into a parse tree that represents the syntactic structure of the text (Figure 2) and then produces a sentence logical form that reflects the meaning, i.e., semantic structure of the text (Figure 3). This process involves a variety of techniques: use of knowledge base, grammar rules, and probabilistic methods in analyzing the text.

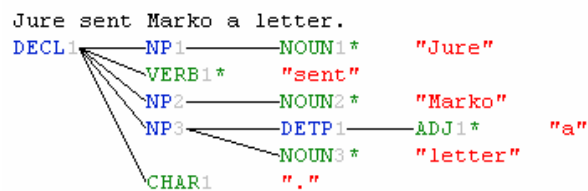


Figure 2: Syntactic tree for the sentence “Jure sent Marko a letter”

```
>display lf
send1 (+Past +Proposition +D1 +T1 +Loc_sr)
  Dsub — Jure1 (+Pers3 +Sing +PrprN)
  Dind — Marko1 (+Pers3 +Sing +PrprN +MarkedCap)
  Dobj — letter1 (+Indef +Pers3 +Sing +Conc +Count)
```

Figure 3: Logical form for the sentence

The logical form for the sentence, shown in Figure 3, shows that the sentence is about sending, where “Jure” is the deep subject (an “Agent” of the activity), “Marko” is the deep indirect object (having a “Benefactive” role), and the “letter” is the deep direct object (assuming the “Patient” role). The notations in parentheses provide Semantic information about each node in the graphs. For example, “Jure” is a masculine, singular, and proper name.

From the logical form we extract constituent substructures in the form of triples: “Jure”←“send”→“Marko” and “Jure”←“send”→“letter”. For each node we preserve semantic tags that are assigned by the NLPWin software. These are used in our further linguistic analyses and machine learning stage.

Figure 4 shows an example that outlines the main processes and output of different stages involved in generating the semantic graph. We first perform deep syntactic analysis to the raw text, using NLPWin software. Then we refine the analysis applying several methods: co-reference resolution, pronominal anaphora resolution, and semantic normalization (discussed in Section 3.3). Resulting triples are then linked based on common concepts into a semantic graph. Figure 5 shows an example of a semantic graph for an entire document.

#### 3.2. Co-reference Resolution For Named Entities

In documents it is common that terms with different surface forms refer to the same entity. Identifying such terms is referred to as co-reference resolution. We restrict our co-reference resolution attempt to syntactic nodes that, in the NLPWin analysis, have the attribute of ‘named entity’. Such are names of people, places, companies, and similar.

For each named entity we record the gender tag that was obtained based on NLPWin semantic resources. This

narrows the set of named entity surface forms we compare with the new record. Then, starting with multi-word named entities, we first eliminate the standard set of English stop words and ‘common’ words, such as “Mr.”, “Mrs.”, “international”, “company”, “group”, “president”, “federal”, etc. We then apply a simple rule by which two terms with distinct surface forms refer to the same entity if all the words from one term also appear as words in the other term. The algorithm, for example, correctly finds that “Hillary Rodham Clinton”, “Hillary Clinton”, “Hillary Rodham”, and “Mrs. Clinton” all refer to the same entity.

### 3.3. Pronominal Anaphora Resolution

NLPWin automatically performs pronoun reference resolution within a single sentence. However, as NLPWin analysis is focused on individual sentences, those pronominal references that cross the sentence boundaries have to be resolved as a post process to the logical form analysis.

We take the approach that is similar to Mitkov in [11]. We start with resolved co-references to named-entities and make a simplifying assumption that pronouns in the text can refer only to named entities mentioned in the same text. We, accordingly, focus on resolving only five basic types of pronouns including all different forms: “he” (“his”, “him”, “himself”), “she”, “I”, “they” and “who”. For a given pronoun, we search sequentially through sentences, backward and forward, and check the type of named entity in order to find suitable candidates. To find candidates we first search backward inside the sentence, then we continue searching backward in previous sentences. If no appropriate candidates are found so far, we extend our search in forward direction – first inside the sentence of the pronoun and then also inside the sentences that follow it. Each candidate is scored based on character and sentence distance and the direction from the pronoun, part of speech attributes, and other linguistic features. Among the scored candidate entities we chose the one with the best score and assign it to the pronoun.

Table 1: Performance of anaphora resolution algorithm

| Pronoun | Frequency | Frequency [%] | Accuracy [%] |
|---------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| He      | 681       | 45.22         | 86.9         |
| They    | 244       | 16.20         | 67.2         |
| It      | 204       | 13.55         |              |
| I       | 64        | 4.25          | 82.8         |
| You     | 50        | 3.32          |              |
| We      | 44        | 2.92          |              |
| That    | 44        | 2.92          |              |
| What    | 27        | 1.79          |              |
| She     | 24        | 1.59          | 62.5         |
| This    | 22        | 1.46          |              |
| Who     | 11        | 0.73          | 63.6         |
| Total   | 1506      |               | 82.1         |

We evaluated our pronoun resolution algorithm on 91 manually labeled documents from DUC 2002 dataset. The set contained 1506 pronouns of which 1024 (68%) were

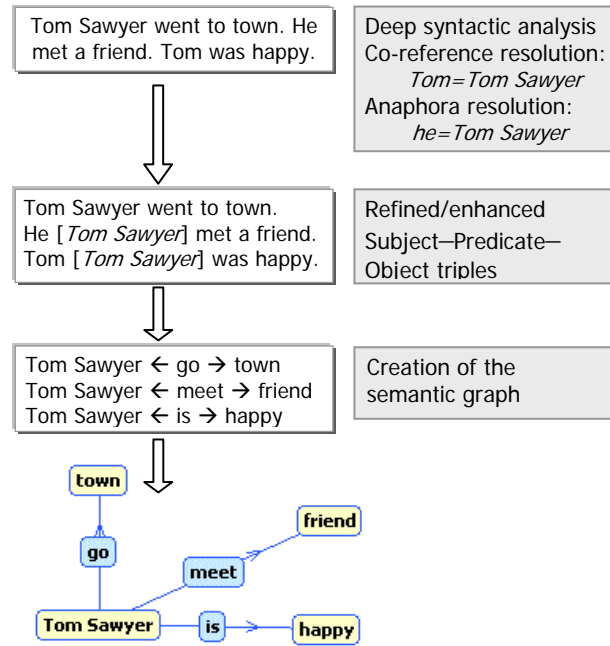


Figure 4. Process of creating a semantic graph.

from the above selected pronoun types and other 432 (32%) were “it”, “you”, “we”, “what”, and similar. Table 1 shows the distribution of most frequent pronouns and the accuracy of resolving the pronouns using our approach. Average accuracy over the 5 selected pronoun types is 82.1%. Scoring function coefficients were optimized through cross-validation experiments on the same data set.

### 3.4. Semantic Normalization

Having completed the pronoun and co-reference resolution, we arrive at a list of triples extracted from individual sentences and would like to link them into a semantic graph. In order to increase the coherence and compactness of the graphs, we decided to use WordNet [6] to establish synonymous relationships among nodes.

WordNet is a semantic network of about 115,000 nodes (concepts) and 340,000 links among the concepts which capture 26 different types of relations. WordNet provides opportunities for more sophisticated analysis and semantic normalization that will be subject of our future work. Synonymy information of concepts enables us to find equivalence relations between distinct triples. For example, as we expand subject node ‘watcher’ and predicate node ‘follow’ of the triple “watcher” ← “follow” → “moon” by synonyms and compare the resulting triples with the triples in the document, we find a match with “spectator” ← “watch” → “moon”.

Similarly we establish equivalence between the triples: “governor Patten” ← “change” → “position” and “governor Patten” ← “modify” → “attitude” and triples “earthquake” ← “hit” → “Northern Iran” and “quake” ← “strike” → “Northern Iran”.

### 3.5. Construction of a Semantic Graph

We merge the logical form triples on subject and object nodes which belong to the same normalized semantic class and thus produce semantic graph, as shown in Figure 5. Subjects and objects are nodes in a graph and



Table 1: Performance of cross-topics summarization in terms of micro-average Precision, Recall and F1 measures. Results for ten-fold cross validation, for different sample size of training data.

| Learning documents | Training set |        |       | Test set  |        |       |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
|                    | Precision    | Recall | F1    | Precision | Recall | F1    |
| 10                 | 33.48        | 88.44  | 48.58 | 23.05     | 64.67  | 33.99 |
| 20                 | 31.26        | 86.45  | 45.92 | 24.49     | 68.69  | 36.11 |
| 50                 | 29.42        | 82.53  | 43.37 | 25.75     | 72.81  | 38.04 |
| 100                | 28.64        | 79.91  | 42.16 | 26.25     | 73.22  | 38.64 |

Table 3: Performance of cross-topics summarization, in terms of macro-average Precision, Recall and F1 measures. Results for ten-fold cross validation, for different sample size of training data.

| Attribute Set      | Training set |        |       | Test set  |        |       |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
|                    | Precision    | Recall | F1    | Precision | Recall | F1    |
| Graph              | 21.63        | 83.40  | 34.35 | 21.35     | 82.40  | 33.91 |
| Linguistic         | 26.27        | 75.78  | 39.02 | 25.48     | 73.31  | 37.82 |
| Graph + Linguistic | 27.28        | 76.66  | 40.24 | 26.97     | 75.96  | 39.81 |
| All                | 28.39        | 78.54  | 41.70 | 27.50     | 76.23  | 40.42 |

Table 4: Some of the most important Subject-Predicate-Object triple attributes.

| Attribute name   | Attribute rank           |        |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
|  | 1 <sup>st</sup> quartile | Median | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile |
| Authority weight of Object node in a semantic graph                    | 1                        | 1      | 1                        |
| Size of weakly connected component of Object node in a semantic graph  | 2                        | 2.5    | 3                        |
| Degree of Object node in a semantic graph                              | 2                        | 3      | 3                        |
| Is Object a name of a country  | 4                        | 5      | 5                        |
| Size of weakly connected component of Subject node in a semantic graph | 6                        | 7      | 9                        |
| Degree of Subject node in a semantic graph                             | 6                        | 10.5   | 12                       |
| PageRank weight of Object node in a semantic graph                     | 6                        | 11     | 12                       |
| Is Object a name of a geographical location                            | 8                        | 13     | 16                       |
| Authority weight of Subject node in a semantic graph                   | 13                       | 18.5   | 23                       |

Due to the small overlap in terms of common triples between the document and human written abstract, we had to rely on human extracted sentence summaries. In preparation for learning, we label as positive examples all subject-predicate-object triples that correspond to sentences in the summaries. Triples from other sentences are designated as negative examples.

#### 4.2. Feature set

Features considered for learning are logical form triples, characterized by attributes of three types.

Linguistic attributes include logical form tags (subject, predicate, object), part of speech tags, depth of the linguistic node in the syntactic or logical form analysis, and about 70 semantic tags (such as gender, location name, person name, etc.). There are total 118 distinct linguistic attributes for each individual node. Fourteen additional attributes come from the semantic graph properties, some mentioned in section 3.5. Finally we include several attributes that approximate document discourse structure: the location of the sentence in the document, frequency and location of the word inside the

Table 5: Performance of within-topic summarization, compared with cross-topic summarization. Comparison shows that training on topic specific yields higher F1 performance.

| Learning using samples of 5 documents | Training set |        |       | Test set  |        |       |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
|                                       | Precision    | Recall | F1    | Precision | Recall | F1    |
| Within-topic                          | 36.49        | 90.63  | 52.03 | 23.60     | 60.05  | 33.89 |
| Cross-topic                           | 36.59        | 92.23  | 52.40 | 20.73     | 60.28  | 30.85 |

sentence, number of different senses of the word, and related.

Each set of attributes is represented as a sparse vector of numeric values. These are concatenated into a single sparse vector and normalized to the unit length, to represent a node in the logical form triple. Similarly, for each triple the node vectors are concatenated and normalized. Thus, the resulting vectors for logical form triples contain about 466 binary and real-valued attributes. For the DUC dataset, 72 of these components have non-zero values, on average.

### 4.3. Learning Algorithm

This rich set of features serves as input to the Support Vector Machine (SVM) classifier [2, 7]. In the initial experiments we explored SVMs with polynomial kernel (up to degree five) and RBF kernel. However, the results were not significantly different from the SVMs with the linear kernel. Thus we continued our experiments with the linear SVMs, setting the parameter C to 2 and J to 6. Parameter C controls the tradeoff between fitting and generalization of the model, while parameter J enables the learner to weigh training errors on positive examples J times more than on negative examples.

The choice of J=6 is motivated by our assumption that the extracted summaries should aim at the higher recall, ensuring that all the human extracted sentences are included and being less sensitive to the possible noise they may be introduced.

### 4.4. Experimental Setup

Besides aiming at a good performance of the automatic summarizer, our important objective is to understand the relative importance of various attribute types that are available for describing the logical form triples. Thus we evaluate how adding features to the model impacts the precision and recall of extracting the logical form triples and corresponding summaries. In addition to standard precision and recall, we report for each experiment the corresponding F1 measure, defined as harmonic mean of the two statistics.

We define the learning task as a binary classification problem. We label as positive examples all subject–predicate–object triples that were extracted from the document sentences which humans selected into the summary. Triples from all other sentences are designated as negative examples. We then learn a model to discriminate between the two classes of triples.

All reported experiment statistics are micro-averaged over the instances of sentence classifications. In all of our experiments we regard the document boundaries, meaning

that triples from a single document all belong either to training or test set and are never shared between the two.

## 4.5. Experimental Results

### 4.5.1. Impact of the Training Set Size

Our sentence classifiers are trained and tested through 10-fold cross-validation experiments, for each of several sizes of training data: 10, 20, 50, and 100 documents. Samples of documents are selected randomly and corresponding sentences used for training and testing. We always run and evaluate the resulting models on both the training and the test sets, to gain insight into the generalization aspects. From the results reported in Table 2, we observe a negative impact of small training sets on the generalization of the model.

### 4.5.2. Impact of various attributes

Data presented in Table 3 provides further insight into the relative importance of different attribute types, the topological graph features, the linguistic features, and the statistical and discourse attributes. Performance statistics are obtained from 10-fold cross-validation using 135 documents in the training set. Relative difference in performance has been evaluated using pair-wise t-test and it has been established that the differences between different runs are all statistically significant.

We see that using linguistic features (syntactic and semantic tags) outperforms the model relying only on the semantic graph topology. Starting with graph attributes and adding linguistic features, we experience 11.5% relative increase in the F1 measure. As new attributes are added to describe triples from additional perspectives, the performance of the classifier consistently increases. The cumulative effect of all attributes considered in the study is 19.2% relative increase in F1 measure over the baseline that uses graph attributes only.

We can also inspect the learned SVM models, i.e., the SVM normals, for the weights assigned to various attributes during the training process. We observe the relative rank of attribute weights across experiment iterations. Since the distributions of weights and corresponding attribute ranks are skewed they are best described by the median.

From Table 4 it is interesting to see that the semantic graph attributes are consistently ranked high among all the attributes used in the model. They describe the element of a triple in relation to other entities mentioned in the text and so give overall structure of the document. For example, ‘Object – authority weight’ measures how other important ‘hub’ nodes in the graph link to it [8]. A good

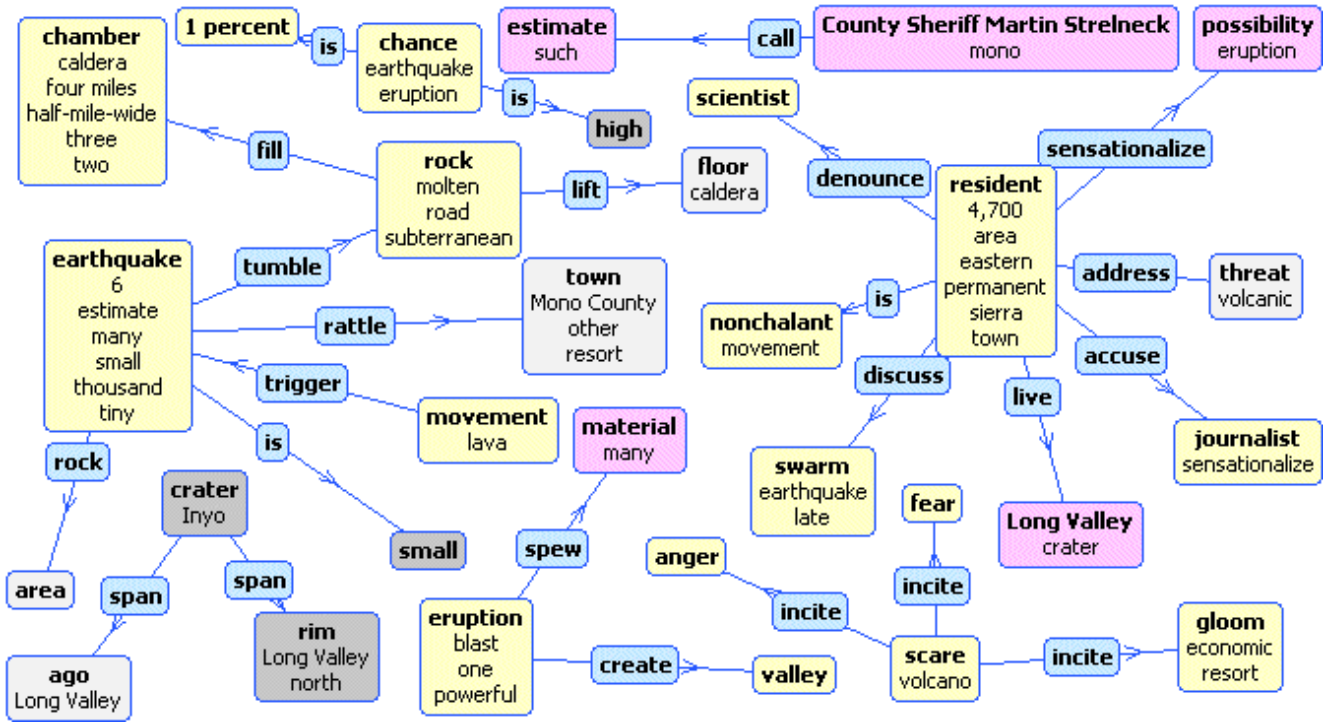


Figure 6: Automatically generated summary (semantic graph) from the document “Long Valley volcano activities”. Subject/object nodes indicated by the light color (yellow) nodes in the graph indicate correct logical form nodes. Dark gray nodes are false positive and false negative nodes.

‘hub’ points to nodes with ‘authoritative’ content, and a node is a good ‘authority’ if it is pointed to by good hubs. Subjects are hubs pointing to authorities – objects. Authority weight captures how important is the object – in how much action it is involved.

The same observation holds for experiments in which all the attributes are normalized to have a value between 0 and 1. This way we prevented the attributes with smaller values to automatically have high weights and vice versa. So all attributes had the same influence on the SVM normal. In our future work we shall study in more details SVM models with heterogeneous attribute types.

These results support our intuition that relations among concepts in the document that result from the syntactic and semantic properties of the text are important for summarization. Interestingly, feature attributes that most strongly characterize non-summary triples are mainly linguistic attributes describing gender, position of the verb, as being inside the quotes, position of the sentence in the document, word frequency, and similar – the latter few attributes are typically used in statistical approaches to summary extraction.

#### 4.5.3. Topic Specific Summarization

For each of 30 topics there are 5 documents on the average with extracted sentence summaries. We used these documents to learn topic specific summaries. We performed ‘leave one out’ cross validation over all 30 topics. More precisely, for each topic, we take all the documents for training, except one. We learn the classifier on the selected documents (all triples extracted from the documents) and test the classifier on one that is left out.

This is repeated for each document in the test and the performance is averaged over all the cross validation runs.

Table 5 shows the performance that is higher from the performance of the topic independent summaries, when the same sample of training data is used. While the data size for topic specific summarization is small and thus does not allow generalization, the results may be indicative of the ability to use the method on a rather small dataset and capture the topic specific trends.

#### 4.6. Sentence Extraction

Extracted logical form triples are used to identify the appropriate sentences for inclusion into the summary. We apply a simple decision rule by which a sentence is included in the summary if at least one of the logical triples from the sentence is nominated by the learner as the summary triple. As logical form triples can be shared by multiple summary sentences, as well as sentences that may not be appropriate for summaries, this additional step introduces further noise. Applying F1 measure to the extracted sentences we find that the micro-average F1 value is about 2% lower relative to those for the triples themselves.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 show semantic graphs for the document and automatically generated summary using our method. Light shaded nodes represent summary nodes – nodes that were generated by the triples extracted from the sentences humans selected into the summary (Figure 7). Dark shaded nodes were generated by the triples from non-summary sentences. And having a semantic graph of a document like that we were learning a model to discriminate between light and dark nodes of the document semantic graph.

## 5. Related Work

Over the past decades, research in text summarization has produced a great volume of literature and methods [13, 15]. However, even the simplified definition of document summaries as document extracts, as proposed by Luhn [10], does not simplify the task of creating comprehensible and useful document surrogates. One can group the efforts into those based on heuristics [5, 10, 14], others based on machine learning techniques [9, 16] and those combining the two. One common theme of research is the depth of the linguistic analysis undertaken in the summarization effort. While most of this work stays at the shallow parsing level, our approach is unique in three main respects. It introduces an intermediate, more generic layer, of text representation within which the structure and content of the document and summary are captured. This direction of research has been outlined by Spark Jones in [15] as still unexplored avenue. Second we apply machine learning technique using features that capture semantic structure, i.e., concepts and relations, in contrast to previous attempts in which linguistic features are of finer granularity, i.e., keywords and noun phrases [9, 16]. Finally, the intermediate semantic graph representation opens up new areas of explorations in which the captured semantic structure itself can serve as a document surrogate and provide means for document navigation.

## 6. Conclusions

We presented a novel approach of document summarization by generating semantic representation of the document and applying machine learning to extract a sub-graph that corresponds to the semantic structure of a human extracted document summary. Experiments on the DUC 2002 data show that adding attribute types to the logical form features help increase the performance of the learnt model, as evidenced by the increase in the micro-average F1 measure. Compared to human extracted summaries we achieve on average recall of 75% and precision of 30%. Our future work will involve explorations of alternative semantic structures on additional data sets, including human generated abstracts.

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