

Solving Natural Language Math Problems

Takuya Matsuzaki
(Nagoya University)

Noriko H. Arai
(National Institute of Informatics)

Solving NL Math – why?

- It is the first and the last goal of symbolic approach to language understanding (LU)
 - Formalization of the domain is the prerequisite for LU
- Problem solving is the only way to compare different LU systems
 - Only the input and output are observable
 - No ground-truth for a mid-layer's output

System Overview

Problem

Let l be the trajectory of $(t + 2, t + 2, t)$ for t ranging over \mathbb{R} . $O(0, 0, 0)$, $A(2, 1, 0)$, and $B(1, 2, 0)$ are on a sphere, S , centered at $C(a, b, c)$.
Determine the condition on a, b, c for which S intersects with l .

Language Understanding

Logical Form in a HOL

$$\exists l \exists u \exists v \exists S \exists R ($$

$$l = \text{line}(u, v) \wedge \forall p (p \in l \leftrightarrow$$

$$\exists t (p = (t + 2, t + 2, t))) \wedge$$

$$S = \text{sphere}((a, b, c), R) \wedge (0, 0, 0) \in S \wedge$$

$$(2, 1, 0) \in S \wedge (1, 2, 0) \in S \wedge$$

$$\exists q (\text{intersect}(S, l, q)))$$

Formula Rewriting

Logical Form in Local Theories

$$\exists u_x \exists u_y \exists u_z (((\neg(u_x = 0)) \vee (\neg(u_y = 0)) \vee (\neg(u_z = 0))) \wedge (\exists v_x \exists v_y \exists v_z ((\exists R ((\exists t ((tu_x + v_x - a)^2 +$$

$$(tu_y + v_y - b)^2 + (tu_z + v_z - c)^2 = R^2)) \wedge (0 < R) \wedge (a^2 + b^2 + c^2 = R^2) \wedge ((1 - a)^2 + (2 - b)^2 +$$

$$\wedge ((2 - a)^2 + (1 - b)^2 + c^2 = R^2))) \wedge (\exists v_{lx} \exists v_{ly} ((\exists v_{lz} ((0 = u_y(v_z - v_{lz}) - u_z(v_y - v_{ly})))$$

$$\wedge (0 = u_z(v_x - v_{lx}) - u_x(v_z - v_{lz})))) \wedge (0 = u_x(v_y - v_{ly}) - u_y(v_x - v_{lx})))) \wedge (\forall p_x \forall p_y \forall p_z$$

$$(((p_x = p_z + 2) \wedge (p_y = p_z + 2)) \vee (\forall t_2 ((\neg(p_x = t_2 u_x + v_x)) \vee (\neg(p_y = t_2 u_y + v_y))$$

$$\vee (\neg(p_z = t_2 u_z + v_z)))))) \wedge (\forall p_t ((\exists t_3 ((p_t = t_3 u_z + v_z) \wedge (p_t + 2 = t_3 u_x + v_x) \wedge (p_t + 2 = t_3 u_y + v_y$$

$$)) \wedge (\exists u_{lx} \exists u_{ly} ((\exists u_{lz} (((\neg(u_{lx} = 0)) \vee (\neg(u_{ly} = 0)) \vee (\neg(u_{lz} = 0))))$$

$$\wedge (0 = u_y u_{lz} - u_z u_{ly}) \wedge (0 = u_z u_{lx} - u_x u_{lz})) \wedge (0 = u_x u_{ly} - u_y u_{lx}))))))$$

CA & ATP

Answer

$$6a = 5 \wedge 6b = 5 \wedge (3c \leq 1 \vee 13 \leq 3c)$$

Today's Topics

- Parsing Math Problem Text with Combinatory Categorical Grammar
- Benchmarking a CAS-based solver with formalized pre-university math problems

Combinatory Categorical Grammar

- Word \Leftrightarrow (syntactic category, λ -expression)

Word type	Example
Proper noun	“John” $\Leftrightarrow (NP, \text{john})$
Common noun	“cat” $\Leftrightarrow (N, \lambda x. \text{cat}(x))$
Intransitive verb	“runs” $\Leftrightarrow (S \setminus NP, \lambda x. \text{run}(x))$
Transitive verb	“loves” $\Leftrightarrow (S \setminus NP/NP, \lambda y. \lambda x. \text{love}(x, y))$
Indefinite article	“a” $\Leftrightarrow (S/(S \setminus NP)/N, \lambda N. \lambda P. \exists x(Nx \wedge Px))$
Quantifier	“every” $\Leftrightarrow (S/(S \setminus NP)/N, \lambda N. \lambda P. \forall x(Nx \rightarrow Px))$

Combinatory rules

Forward application

Backward application

Forward composition

$$\text{>} \frac{X/Y : f \quad Y : y}{X : f y}$$

$$\text{<} \frac{Y : y \quad X \setminus Y : f}{X : f y}$$

$$\text{>}_B \frac{X/Y : f \quad Y/Z : g}{X/Z : \lambda z.f(gz)} \text{ etc.}$$

loves

$S \setminus NP/NP :$
 $\lambda x.\lambda y.\text{love}(y,x)$

>

a

$S \setminus NP \setminus (S \setminus NP/NP)/N :$
 $\lambda N.\lambda P.\lambda y.\exists x(Nx \wedge Pxy)$

cat

$N :$
 $\lambda x.\text{cat}(x)$

$S \setminus NP \setminus (S \setminus NP/NP) :$
 $\lambda P.\lambda y.\exists x(\text{cat}(x) \wedge Pxy)$

John

<

$NP : \text{john}$

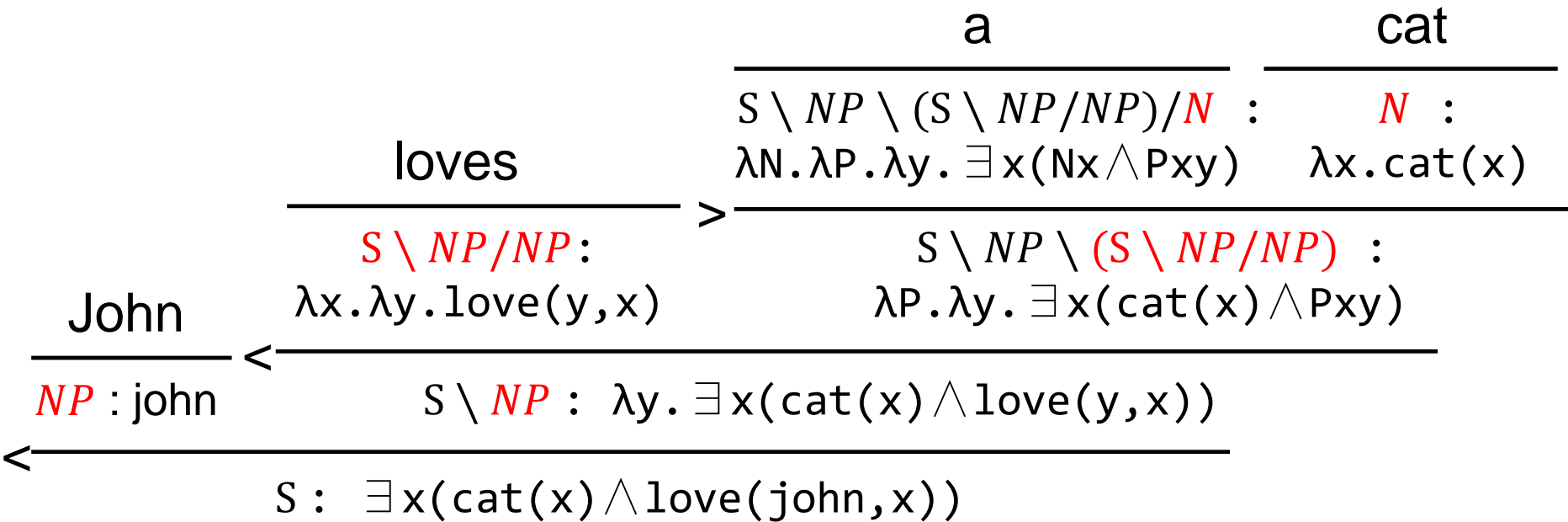
$S \setminus NP : \lambda y.\exists x(\text{cat}(x) \wedge \text{love}(y,x))$

<

$S : \exists x(\text{cat}(x) \wedge \text{love}(\text{john},x))$

Combinatory rules

Forward application	Backward application	Forward composition	
$\displaystyle > \frac{X/Y : f \quad Y : y}{X : f y}$	$\displaystyle < \frac{Y : y \quad X \setminus Y : f}{X : f y}$	$\displaystyle >_B \frac{X/Y : f \quad Y/Z : g}{X/Z : \lambda z.f(gz)}$	etc.



Syntactic Category = Semantic Type + Syntactic Constraints

Example

“distance” (as in “distance between P and Q ”)

- Syntactic cat.: $NP_{\text{Real}}/PP_{\text{between},(\text{Point},\text{Point})}$
- Semantic function: $\lambda p.\text{dist}(p)$
- Semantic type: $(\text{Point}, \text{Point}) \rightarrow \text{Real}$

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{distance} \\
 \hline
 NP_{\text{Real}}/PP_{\text{btwn},(\text{Pnt},\text{Pnt})} : \\
 \lambda p.\text{dist}(p)
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{between} \\
 \hline
 PP_{\text{btwn},(\alpha,\beta)}/NP_{(\alpha,\beta)} : \\
 \text{id}
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{ccc}
 P & & Q \\
 \hline
 NP_{\text{Pnt}} : NP_{(\alpha,\beta)} \setminus NP_{\alpha}/NP_{\beta} : NP_{\text{Pnt}} : \\
 P & \lambda y.\lambda x.(x,y) & Q \\
 \hline
 \end{array} \\
 NP_{(\text{Pnt},\text{Pnt})} : \\
 (P,Q)
 \end{array}
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 PP_{\text{btwn},(\text{Pnt},\text{Pnt})} : \\
 (P,Q)
 \end{array}
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \hline
 NP_{\text{Real}} : \text{dist}(P,Q)
 \end{array}$$

Comparison with compilers

- Compilers : source code → machine code
- NL parsing : math problem → logical form
- NL parsing = type check
 - + syntax check
 - + denotational semantics
- Besides, the grammar is only partially known and ambiguous

Grammar and lexicon: current status

- Size
 - 31 combinatory rules
 - 6,652 different word forms
 - 42,154 triples of <word, category, λ -term>
- What's not in textbook (toy) grammars:
 - Imperatives, pluralities, relation/attribute nouns, context dependent semantics, action verbs, etc.
- Coverage:
 - 70%~80% of university math exam sentences can be parsed (either correctly or wrongly)

Remaining issues

- Lexicon / grammar coverage
- Hypothesis explosion due to local ambiguity
 - “ $y = ax^2$ ”: equality or $\lambda x.ax^2$ or $\{ (x,y) \mid y = ax^2 \}$
 - “if A then B and C”: $(A \rightarrow B) \& C$ or $A \rightarrow (B \& C)$
- Inter-sentential logical structure analysis. E.g.,
 - Sentence 1: If A then B.
 - Sentence 2: If C then D.
 - $(A \rightarrow B) \& (C \rightarrow D)$
 - $A \rightarrow (B \& (C \rightarrow D))$
 - $(A \rightarrow B) \& (A \rightarrow (B \& C) \rightarrow D)$

Benchmarking CA-based Problem Solver on Formalized Pre-univ. Math Problems

Motivation

- Development of the AR layer of the solver in parallel with the NLU layer
- Evaluation on problems with varying difficulty
- Estimation of the computational cost of the reasoning on NLU output

Benchmark Problems: Sources

- **Ex:** 288 problems from exercise book series
 - 200 problems on geometry
 - 100 problems on integer arithmetic
- **Univ:** 245 problems from the entrance exams of seven national universities
 - Geometry, real arithmetic, pre-calculus etc. expressible in the theory of RCF
- **IMO:** 212 problems from the International Mathematics Olympiads (1959-2014)
 - All geometry and real arithmetic problems
 - Some of number theory, combinatorics etc.
 - 2/3 of the all past problems till 2014

Encoding process

- Six students (majored in math/CS) and two full-time researchers encoded the problems in a higher-order language
- Literal translation
 - Word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence
 - No inference
 - No paraphrase

Example

Let D be a point inside acute triangle ABC such that

$$\angle ADB = \angle ACB + \pi/2$$

and

$$AC \cdot BD = AD \cdot BC$$

Calculate the ratio $(AB \cdot CD)/(AC \cdot BD)$.

(IMO 1993 Problem 2)

(Find (x)

(exists (A B C D)

(&& (is-acute-triangle A B C)

(point-inside-of D (triangle A B C))

(= (rad-of-angle (angle A D B))

(+ (rad-of-angle (angle A C B)) (/ (Pi) 2)))

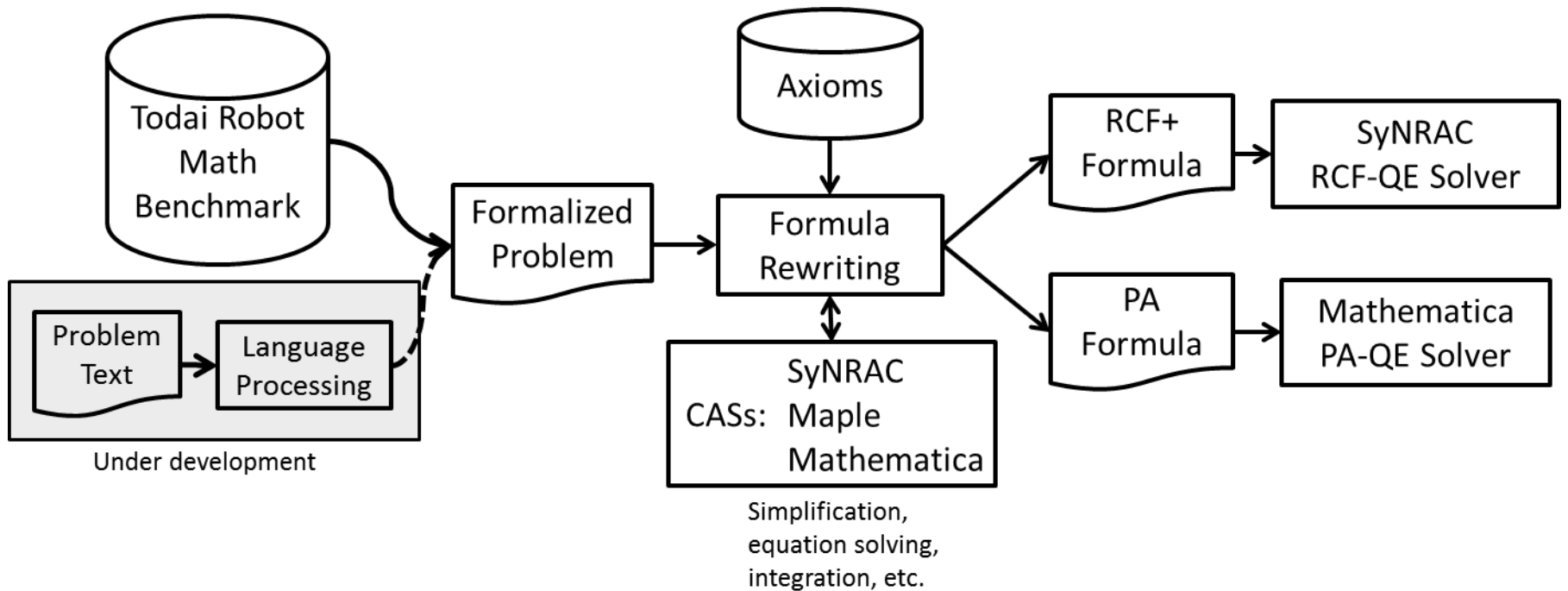
(= (* (distance A C) (distance B D))

(* (distance A D) (distance B D)))

(= x (/ (* (distance A B) (distance C D))

(* (distance A C) (distance B D))))))

CAS-based solver



Syntactic Profile (per problem; medians)

	Pre-univ math benchmark				TPTP-THF
	Ex	Univ			
# Formulas	2	2			10
# Atoms	65	95	65	72	88
Avg atoms/Fml	38	54	56	48	6
# Symbols	16	19	# of λ abstractions		9
# Variables	9	Different types quantifications			19
λ	3	3	1	2	2
\forall	0	0	4	0	9
\exists	4	6	1	4	2
# Connectives	55	78	58	61	52

Problem scale is at similar level

Different types quantifications

Overall results

		Succeeded				Failed		
		Success %	Time (sec) Min/Med/Avg/Max			Timeout	Wrong	Other
Ex	RCF	63.8% (111/174)	13/18.0/	37.4/	343	10.9%	1.7%	23.6%
	PA	57.1% (48/ 84)	12/17.0/	20.3/	172	0.0%	0.0%	42.9%
	Other	10.0% (3/ 30)	13/14.0/	17.7/	26	0.0%	0.0%	90.0%
	All	56.3% (162/288)	12/17.0/	32.0/	343	6.6%	1.0%	36.1%
Univ	All (RCF only)	58.0% (142/245)	12/26.5/	85.5/	1417	15.5%	2.9%	23.7%
IMO	RCF	16.5% (19/115)	14/25.0/	51.8/	197	29.6%	0.9%	53.0%
	PA	4.8% (2/ 42)	25/29.5/	29.5/	34	16.7%	0.0%	78.6%
	Other	3.6% (2/ 55)	17/24.5/	24.5/	32	12.7%	0.0%	83.6%
	All	10.8% (23/212)	14/25.0/	47.5/	197	22.6%	0.5%	66.0%

- Difficulty of RCF problems: Ex < Univ < IMO
- Difficulty of PA problems: Ex << IMO

Results on RCF problems in Ex

# of Stars	Succeeded			Failed		
	Success %	Time (sec)		Timeout	Wrong	Other
		Min/Med/Avg/Max				
1	82.4% (28/34)	13/17.0/20.4/ 65		2.9%	0.0%	14.7%
2	79.4% (27/34)	16/18.0/28.1/230		2.9%	2.9%	14.7%
3	57.6% (19/33)	15/17.0/36.1/341		6.1%	0.0%	36.4%
4	47.4% (18/38)	15/19.0/62.1/343		23.7%	2.6%	26.3%
5	54.3% (19/35)	16/28.0/53.6/279		17.1%	2.9%	25.7%

- # of Stars = difficulty level assessed by the editors of the practice book series

Results on IMO problems by years

Years	Human Efficiency	Machine Efficiency	Succeeded	Failed		
				Timeout	Wrong	Other
1959-69	58.23%	21.11%	26.3% (15/57)	22.8%	1.8%	49.1%
1970-79	46.57%	7.00%	13.3% (4/30)	26.7%	0.0%	60.0%
1980-89	44.35%	1.85%	3.1% (1/32)	31.2%	0.0%	65.6%
1990-99	38.27%	3.33%	5.7% (2/35)	11.4%	0.0%	82.9%
2000-13	34.31%	1.19%	1.9% (1/54)	22.2%	0.0%	75.9%

- Human Efficiency: IMO participants' avg. score
- Machine Efficiency: system's score
- IMO problems get harder by year both for human and machines

Summary

- Natural Language Math Solving System combining
 - Grammar-driven semantic analysis
 - Inference by QE
- Benchmark result on the inference part
 - Exercise & entrance exam: ~60%
 - Mathematical Olympiads: 5~15%