

VECTOR SEMANTICS: LECTURE 3

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MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM STUDYING FREQUENCY

- Zipf and Herdan laws work well Kornai, 1999a; Kornai, 2002
- It's all about information Brown et al., 1992
- Entropy measures maximum average compressibility over the wire (Jelinek, 1997) ML Ch 7.1
- Kolmogorov complexity can achieve more compression, but only semi-computable (Li and Vitányi, 1997; Vitanyi and Li, 2000) ML Ch 7.3
- Minimum Description Length philosophy used in linguistics (Borbély and Kornai, 2019)
- With a twist: amortizing the universal component (Kornai, Zséder, and Recski, 2013)
- Engineering takeaway (1): do the frequent things first
- Engineering takeaway (2): OOV is a persistent problem

WORDS

- Minimum free forms (Bloomfield, 1926)
- Phonological words: units between pauses
- (Orthographical words)
- Lexemes (also called lexical entries) can be MWEs like *as is*
- Subentries (Kornai, 2023)
- Subsubentries csinál

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LEXEME

- Pronunciation (phonology database key)
- Part of speech (syntax db key)
- Definition (semantics db key)
- Bunch of ancillary info: etymology, variants, style, topic, frequency, hyphenation . . .
- Headword usually derived via orthography
- Easily extended to bilingual/multilingual
- But what to do with technical vocabulary? Millions of “words” for chemical compounds, animal species, . . .

COVERAGE







- Ideally, we'd want the dictionary frequency-ordered
- But high coverage remains elusive, OOV is a big problem
- Common vocabulary often used in L2 instruction (Kornai, 2021)
- It is less trivial to define than 'most frequent' (Thorndike, 1921), corrected frequency
- Our interest is more with basic vocabulary (Ogden, 1944), Simple Wikipedia (Yasseri, Kornai, and Kertész, 2012)
- Everybody tries to build a basic list:
<https://concepticon.clld.org> has 450+ sources







LEXICON OR ENCYCLOPEDIA

- In many topics, technical vocabulary is key
- Proper names and named entities
- PER, LOC, ORG – hundreds of millions of entries in each category
- *hutch for sale, as is*

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Universality
- Reductivity
- No encyclopedic knowledge
- Read VS Ch. 1.2

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-  Jelinek, Frederick (1997). *Statistical Methods for Speech Recognition*. MIT Press.
-  Kornai, András (2002). “How many words are there?” In: *Glottometrics* 2.4, pp. 61–86.
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-  — (1999a). “Zipf’s law outside the middle range”. In: *Proceedings of the Sixth Meeting on Mathematics of Language*. Ed. by J. Rogers. University of Central Florida, pp. 347–356.
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-  Ogden, C.K. (1944). *Basic English: a general introduction with rules and grammar*. K. Paul, Trench, Trubner.
-  Thorndike, Edward L. (1921). *The teacher’s word book*. New York Teachers College, Columbia University.



Vitanyi, Paul M. B. and Ming Li (2000). “Minimum description length induction, Bayesianism, and Kolmogorov complexity”. In: *IEEE Transactions on Information Theory* 46.2, pp. 446–464.



Yasseri, Taha, András Kornai, and János Kertész (2012). “A practical approach to language complexity: a Wikipedia case study”. In: *PLoS ONE* 7.11. DOI: [e48386.doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0048386](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0048386).