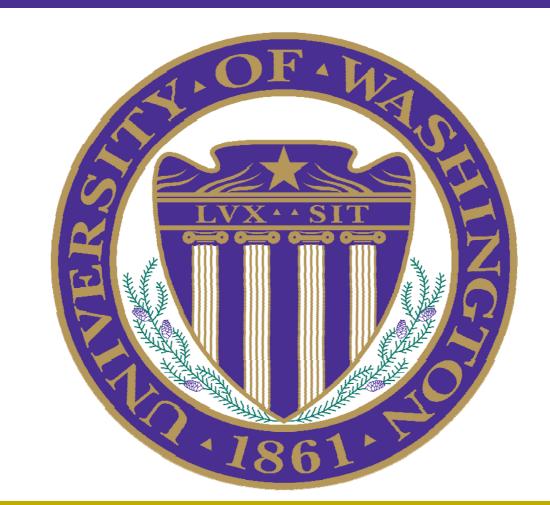
The University of Washington Machine Translation System for IWSL 2009

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Overview

- We participated in two BTEC translation tasks: Chinese-English and Arabic-English
- Our interests include
 - Different preprocessing schemes for Chinese and Arabic
 - Combination of phrase tables based on different alignments
 - Semi-supervised reranking of N-best lists
 - Sentence-type specific part-of-speech (POS) language modeling for rescoring

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Baseline translation system

- A state-of-the-art two-pass phrase-based SMT system
- Trained within the Moses development and decoding framework
- A 4-gram Language model trained using the SRILM toolkit



Preprocessing schemes

- Chinese segmentation and markup
 - The Stanford segmenter for re-segmenting the Chinese data
 - Character-based segmentation for the Chinese data
 - An in-house tool *Decatur* to markup dates and numbers in both the Chinese and English data
 - A simple tool to markup just numbers in both the Chinese and English data
 - Strip off all punctuations in both the Chinese and English data
 - None of the above schemes led to significance improvement over the original segmentation
- Arabic tokenization
 - The Columbia University MADA and TOKEN tools with two schemes:
 - Split off w+, f+, l+, b+, and Al+
 - TOKAN's D2 scheme, which does not split off Al+ but instead separates s+
 - The first scheme yielded better performance



Phrase table combination

- Phrase tables learned from GIZA++ and MTTK alignments respectively
- The two individual tables were combined into a single table
- Additional binary features to indicate which alignment produced each phrase pair entry
- The combined table outperformed the individual tables in the Chinese-English system



Semi-supervised reranking

f: ranking function

P_L: labeled data Pair-wise samples (x¹, v²)

Pair-wise samples (x^{l} , y^{l}) collected from each N-best list of a held out set, such that x^{l} ranks higher than y^{l}

$$f^* = \underset{f}{argmin}$$

$$\sum e^{-(f(x^l)-f(y^l))}$$

P_U: unlabeled data

Pair-wise samples (xu, yu) collected from the N-best list of a given test sentence

$$\sum_{P_{U}} e^{-\left|f\left(x^{u}\right)-f\left(y^{u}\right)\right|}$$

- The labeled data were produced using smoothed sentence-level BLEU scores
- The ranking function was learned using a modified RankBoost algorithm
 - Maximize the margins of the labeled and unlabeled data jointly
 - Treats the reranking problem as a problem of binary classification on hypothesis pairs
- Iteratively train a weak ranker and adjust sample weights according to the classification results
- The final ranking function is a linear combination of the weak rankers from all iterations
- Applied in the second pass for reranking N-best lists
- For IWSLT 2007 Italian-English and Arabic-English data, it achieved substantial improvements
- For this year data, it improved precision based evaluation metrics, such as PER, TER, WER and Precision, but degraded n-gram based metrics, such as BLEU and NIST

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Sentence-type specific POS language model

- Captures the syntactic differences between questions and statements
- Determine the sentence type using punctuations in the source sentences
- Applied in the second pass for reranking N-best lists
- Led to a small improvement in the Chinese-English system

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Official evaluation results

	case+punc	no_case+no_punc
BLEU	0.41	0.40
PER	0.42	0.45
Meteor	0.66	0.62
NIST	7.05	7.30

able 1: the Chinese-English sy	vstem
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	case+punc	no_case+no_punc
BLEU	0.48	0.48
PER	0.35	0.38
Meteor	0.72	0.69
NIST	6.85	6.93

Table 2: the Arabic-English system