



**BABE, MY LIFE IS A
MARKOV CHAIN**

**GIVEN THE PRESENT, THE
FUTURE DOES NOT
DEPEND ON THE PAST**

CS 2731

Introduction to Natural Language Processing

Session 17: POS tagging, NER, HMMs part 1

Michael Miller Yoder

October 28, 2024



School of Computing and Information

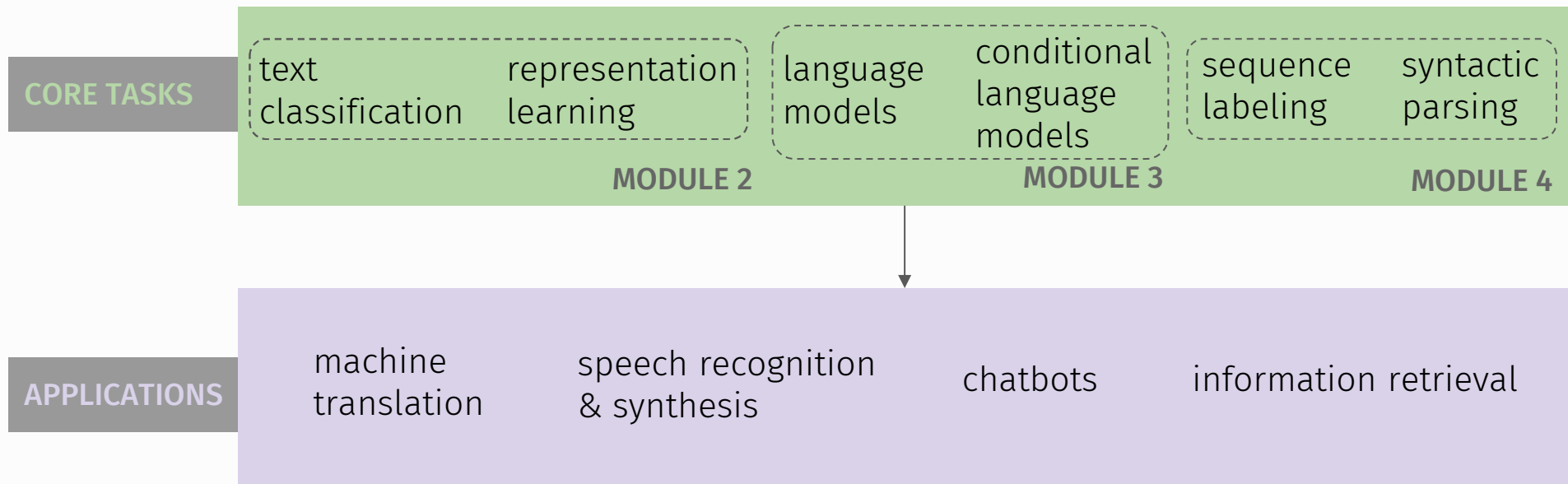
Course logistics

- [Homework 3](#) is **due tonight at 11:59pm**
 - Character-level GPT-2 output might not be great—that's okay
 - Try to get some intermediate output (loss values on the training set) while training to know that it's doing something
- [Homework 4](#) is **due next Thu Nov 7**

Optional NLP colloquium talk this Friday

- Maarten Sap from CMU is giving the Pitt CS Colloquium talk **this Fri Nov 1, 12-2pm, SENSQ 5317** with lunch (!)
- Title: "Artificial Social Intelligence? On the challenges of Socially Aware and Ethically informed LLMs"
- Learn more here: <https://calendar.pitt.edu/event/cs-colloquium-artificial-social-intelligence-on-the-challenges-of-socially-aware-and-ethically-informed-llms>

Core tasks and applications of NLP



Overview: POS tagging, NER, HMMs part 1

- Parts of speech
- Part-of-speech (POS) tagging
- Named entity recognition (NER)
- Hidden Markov Models (HMMs)

Parts of speech

My cat who lives dangerously no longer
has nine lives.

My cat who **lives** dangerously no longer
has nine **lives**.

My cat who **lives** dangerously no longer has nine **lives**.

lives /lɪvz/ verb

lives /ləjvz/ noun

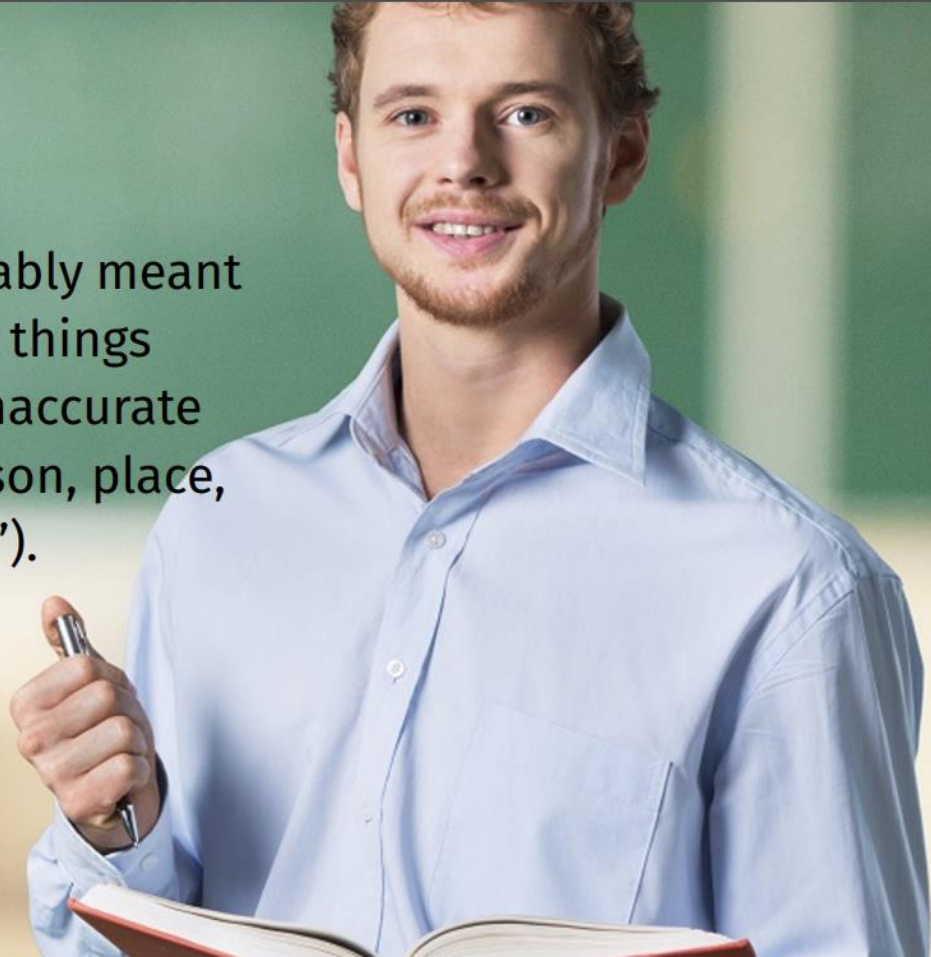


Examples of Parts of Speech

PART OF SPEECH	EXAMPLES
noun	dog, cat, professor, exam, fear, loathing, oppression, void, text, Bavarian
verb	enjoy, walk, finish, trust, hug, like, understand, be, text, drink
adjective	nice, happy, red, exciting, ludicrous, funny, ancient, Bavarian
adverb	slowly, quickly, shrewdly, foolishly, boisterously, undercover, yesterday
preposition	to, for, from, under, by
auxiliary verbs	be, have, must, might, will, would
determiner	the, a(n), this, that, my, her
pronouns	he, she, it, this, that
conjunctions	and, but, however, nevertheless, so

Your English Teacher Was a Well-Intentioned Liar

Your English teacher probably meant well, but taught you many things about language that are inaccurate (like that a noun is a “person, place, thing, or abstract concept”).



Slide credit: David Mortensen

Criteria from linguistics for parts of speech

Defining parts of speech by **where they appear** and **what they are made of** works better across languages than semantic definitions (so say the linguists).

morphology What is the distribution of morphemes within these words?

Same POS \Rightarrow similar morphemes

syntax What is the distribution of words within phrases and sentences?

Same POS \Rightarrow similar roles/contexts

Open Class Parts of Speech

Classes to which neologisms are readily added. In English:

nouns can be both subjects and objects of verbs and objects of prepositions, (usually) be singular or plural, have determiners, be modified by adjectives, and be possessed

verbs can take noun phrases as arguments and tense morphology and can be modified by adverbs

adjectives can modify nouns and take comparative and superlative morphology where allowed by prosody

adverbs can modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs

Closed Class Parts of Speech

Classes to which neologisms are not readily added. In English:

prepositions occur before noun phrases, connecting them syntactically to larger phrases

determiners occur at the beginning of noun phrases

conjunction join phrases, clauses, and sentences

auxiliary verbs occur before (non-finite) main verbs

particles are associated with a verb and are “moveable” (e.g. *He tore **off** his shirt* versus *He tore his shirt **off***)

numerals are distributed in some ways like nouns and in others like adjectives

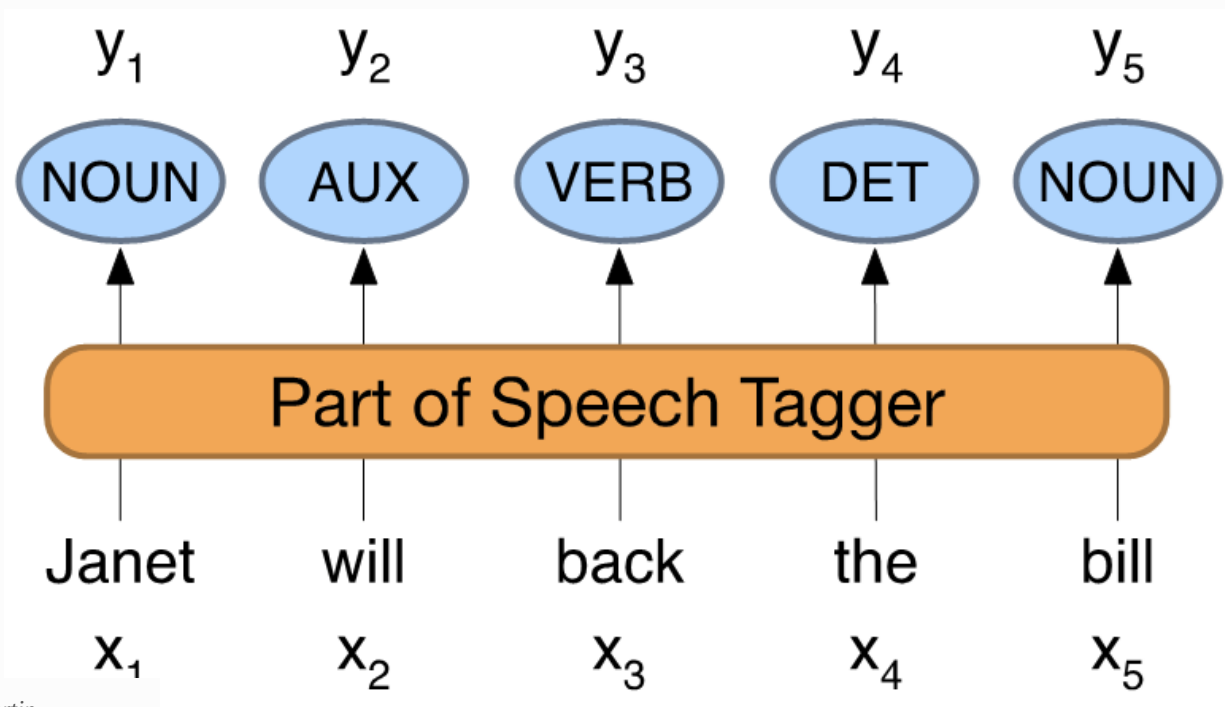
What about pronouns?

- Pronouns are generally considered, in English, to be a closed class—it is not easy to add new items to it.
- What are we to make of **neopronouns** like *xe* and *xem* or *ze* and *hir*?
- Their existence suggests that pronouns are not a completely closed class
 - Social movements can change grammar!
 - But it is difficult due to anti-transgender attitudes and to pronouns being a rather closed class in English
- In some languages (e.g., Thai) pronouns clearly are an open class

Part of speech (POS) tagging

Part-of-speech tagging

Map from sequence x_1, \dots, x_n of words to y_1, \dots, y_n of POS tags



“Universal Dependencies” tagset [Nivre et al. 2016]

	Tag	Description	Example
Open Class	ADJ	Adjective: noun modifiers describing properties	<i>red, young, awesome</i>
	ADV	Adverb: verb modifiers of time, place, manner	<i>very, slowly, home, yesterday</i>
	NOUN	words for persons, places, things, etc.	<i>algorithm, cat, mango, beauty</i>
	VERB	words for actions and processes	<i>draw, provide, go</i>
	PROPN	Proper noun: name of a person, organization, place, etc..	<i>Regina, IBM, Colorado</i>
	INTJ	Interjection: exclamation, greeting, yes/no response, etc.	<i>oh, um, yes, hello</i>
Closed Class Words	ADP	Adposition (Preposition/Postposition): marks a noun’s spacial, temporal, or other relation	<i>in, on, by under</i>
	AUX	Auxiliary: helping verb marking tense, aspect, mood, etc.,	<i>can, may, should, are</i>
	CCONJ	Coordinating Conjunction: joins two phrases/clauses	<i>and, or, but</i>
	DET	Determiner: marks noun phrase properties	<i>a, an, the, this</i>
	NUM	Numeral	<i>one, two, first, second</i>
	PART	Particle: a preposition-like form used together with a verb	<i>up, down, on, off, in, out, at, by</i>
	PRON	Pronoun: a shorthand for referring to an entity or event	<i>she, who, I, others</i>
SCONJ	Subordinating Conjunction: joins a main clause with a subordinate clause such as a sentential complement	<i>that, which</i>	
Other	PUNCT	Punctuation	<i>; , ()</i>
	SYM	Symbols like \$ or emoji	<i>\$, %</i>
	X	Other	<i>asdf, qwfg</i>

Penn TreeBank tagset for English

Tag	Description	Example	Tag	Description	Example
CC	coordin. conjunction	<i>and, but, or</i>	SYM	symbol	<i>+, %, &</i>
CD	cardinal number	<i>one, two, three</i>	TO	“to”	<i>to</i>
DT	determiner	<i>a, the</i>	UH	interjection	<i>ah, oops</i>
EX	existential ‘there’	<i>there</i>	VB	verb, base form	<i>eat</i>
FW	foreign word	<i>mea culpa</i>	VBD	verb, past tense	<i>ate</i>
IN	preposition/sub-conj	<i>of, in, by</i>	VBG	verb, gerund	<i>eating</i>
JJ	adjective	<i>yellow</i>	VBN	verb, past participle	<i>eaten</i>
JJR	adj., comparative	<i>bigger</i>	VBP	verb, non-3sg pres	<i>eat</i>
JJS	adj., superlative	<i>wildest</i>	VBZ	verb, 3sg pres	<i>eats</i>
LS	list item marker	<i>1, 2, One</i>	WDT	wh-determiner	<i>which, that</i>
MD	modal	<i>can, should</i>	WP	wh-pronoun	<i>what, who</i>
NN	noun, sing. or mass	<i>llama</i>	WP\$	possessive wh-	<i>whose</i>
NNS	noun, plural	<i>llamas</i>	WRB	wh-adverb	<i>how, where</i>
NNP	proper noun, singular	<i>IBM</i>	\$	dollar sign	<i>\$</i>
NNPS	proper noun, plural	<i>Carolinas</i>	#	pound sign	<i>#</i>
PDT	predeterminer	<i>all, both</i>	“	left quote	<i>‘ or “</i>
POS	possessive ending	<i>’s</i>	”	right quote	<i>’ or ”</i>
PRP	personal pronoun	<i>I, you, he</i>	(left parenthesis	<i>[, (, {, <</i>
PRP\$	possessive pronoun	<i>your, one’s</i>)	right parenthesis	<i>],), }, ></i>
RB	adverb	<i>quickly, never</i>	,	comma	<i>,</i>
RBR	adverb, comparative	<i>faster</i>	.	sentence-final punc	<i>. ! ?</i>
RBS	adverb, superlative	<i>fastest</i>	:	mid-sentence punc	<i>: ; ... --</i>
RP	particle	<i>up, off</i>			

Why part of speech tagging?

- Can be useful for other NLP tasks
 - Parsing: POS tagging can improve syntactic parsing
 - MT: reordering of adjectives and nouns (say from Spanish to English)
 - Sentiment or affective tasks: may want to distinguish adjectives or other POS
 - Text-to-speech (how do we pronounce “lead” or “object”?)
- Or linguistic or language-analytic computational tasks
 - Need to control for POS when studying linguistic change like creation of new words, or meaning shift
 - Or control for POS in measuring meaning similarity or difference

POS Tagging is a Disambiguation Task

Consider the following sentences:

I	'm	gonna	make	him	an	offer	he	can	't	refuse
PRO	V	AUX	V	PRO	DET	N	PRO	AUX	ADV	V
			N			V				N



There are eight different ways of tagging this sentence if words are taken out of context. POS Tagging task: **choose the best of these.**

How difficult is POS tagging in English?

Roughly 15% of word types are ambiguous

- Hence 85% of word types are unambiguous
- *Janet* is always PROPN, *hesitantly* is always ADV

But those 15% tend to be very common.

So ~60% of word tokens are ambiguous

E.g., *back*

earnings growth took a *back*/ADJ seat

a small building in the *back*/NOUN

a clear majority of senators *back*/VERB the bill

enable the country to buy *back*/PART debt

I was twenty-one *back*/ADV then

Sources of information for POS tagging

Janet **will** back the **bill**
AUX/NOUN/VERB? **NOUN/VERB?**

Prior probabilities of word/tag

- "**will**" is usually an AUX

Identity of neighboring words

- "**the**" means the next word is probably not a verb

Morphology and wordshape:

- Prefixes
- Suffixes
- Capitalization

unable:

un- → ADJ

importantly:

-ly → ADJ

Janet:

CAP → PROP

Standard algorithms for POS tagging

Supervised Machine Learning Algorithms:

- Hidden Markov Models
- Conditional Random Fields (CRFs)
- Neural sequence models (RNNs or Transformers)
- Large Language Models (like BERT), finetuned

All required a hand-labeled training set, all about equal performance (97% on English)

All make use of information sources we discussed

- Via human created features: HMMs and CRFs
- Via representation learning: Neural LMs

Named entity recognition (NER)

Named entities

- **Named entity** means anything that can be referred to with a proper name. Most common 4 tags:
 - **PER** (Person): “Marie Curie”
 - **LOC** (Location): “New York City”
 - **ORG** (Organization): “Stanford University”
 - **GPE** (Geo-Political Entity): “Boulder, Colorado”
- Often multi-word phrases
- But the term is also extended to things that aren't entities:
 - dates, times, prices

Named entity tagging

The task of named entity recognition (NER):

- find spans of text that constitute proper names
- tag the type of the entity.

NER output

Citing high fuel prices, [ORG **United Airlines**] said [TIME **Friday**] it has increased fares by [MONEY **\$6**] per round trip on flights to some cities also served by lower-cost carriers. [ORG **American Airlines**], a unit of [ORG **AMR Corp.**], immediately matched the move, spokesman [PER **Tim Wagner**] said. [ORG **United**], a unit of [ORG **UAL Corp.**], said the increase took effect [TIME **Thursday**] and applies to most routes where it competes against discount carriers, such as [LOC **Chicago**] to [LOC **Dallas**] and [LOC **Denver**] to [LOC **San Francisco**].

Why NER?

- Sentiment analysis: consumer sentiment toward a particular company or person?
- Question Answering: answer questions about an entity?
- Information Extraction: Extracting facts about entities from text.

Why NER is hard

1) Segmentation

- In POS tagging, no segmentation problem since each word gets one tag.
- In NER we have to find and segment the entities!

2) Type ambiguity

[PER Washington] was born into slavery on the farm of James Burroughs.

[ORG Washington] went up 2 games to 1 in the four-game series.

Blair arrived in [LOC Washington] for what may well be his last state visit.

In June, [GPE Washington] passed a primary seatbelt law.

BIO tagging [Ramshaw and Marcus 1995]

How can we turn this structured problem into a sequence problem like POS tagging, with one label per word?

[PER Jane Villanueva] of [ORG United Airlines Holding] discussed the [LOC Chicago] route.

Words	BIO Label
Jane	B-PER
Villanueva	I-PER
of	O
United	B-ORG
Airlines	I-ORG
Holding	I-ORG
discussed	O
the	O
Chicago	B-LOC
route	O
.	O

BIO tagging

B: token that *begins* a span

I: tokens *inside* a span

O: tokens outside of any span

of tags (where n is #entity types):

1 O tag,

n B tags,

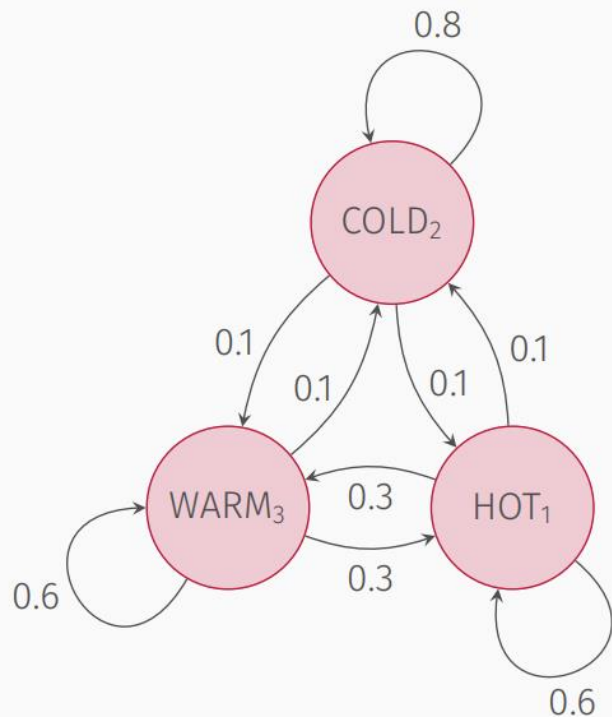
n I tags

total of $2n+1$

Words	BIO Label
Jane	B-PER
Villanueva	I-PER
of	O
United	B-ORG
Airlines	I-ORG
Holding	I-ORG
discussed	O
the	O
Chicago	B-LOC
route	O
.	O

Hidden Markov Models (HMMs)

Markov Chains Tell Us about the Probabilities of Sequences of Random Variables



The figure to the left represents a Markov Chain.

- States
- Transitions
- Weights (probabilities)

The probability of COLD₂ at the timestep after COLD₂ is 0.8.

The probability of HOT₁ after COLD₂ is 0.1.

The probability of HOT₁ → WARM₃ → COLD₂ is $0.3 \times 0.1 = 0.03$

The Markov Assumption applies.

The Markov Assumption

“When predicting the future, the past doesn’t matter—only the present.”

in other words

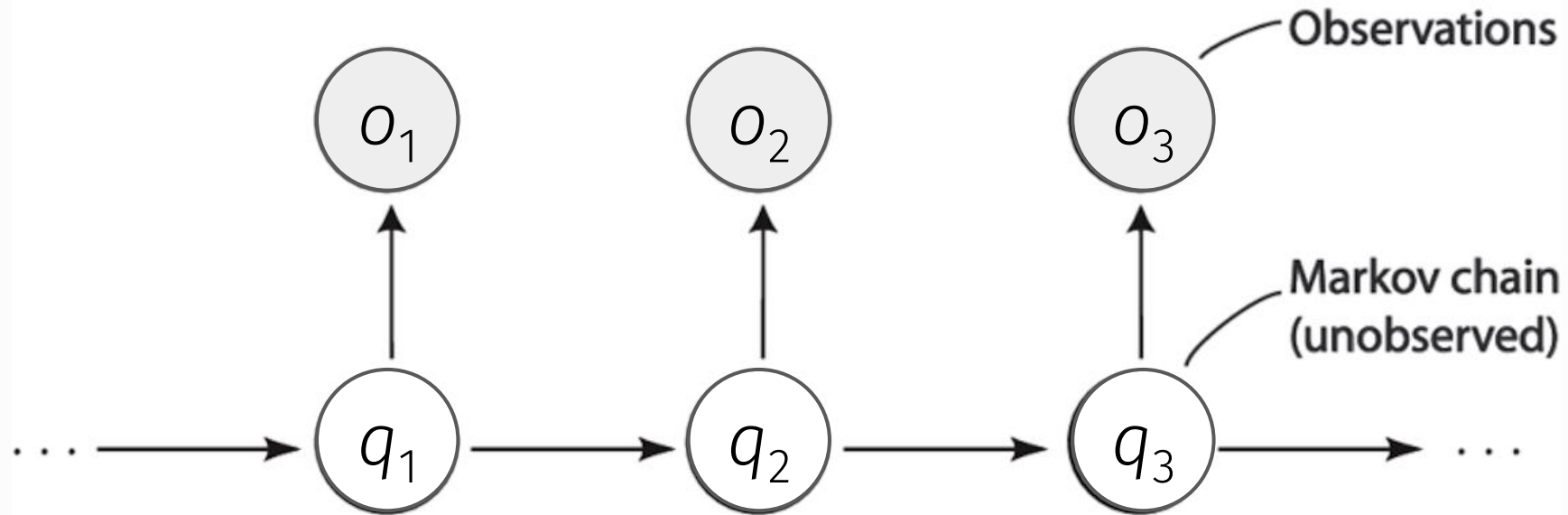
$$p(q_i = a | q_1 \dots q_{i-1}) = P(q_i = a | q_{i-1})$$

This is the same assumption we made for ngram language modeling.

In Hidden Markov Models, Markov Chains are Hidden

The basic idea of a Hidden Markov Model (or HMM) is like that of a Markov Chain, except that the states are never observed.

- Observations are “emitted” from the hidden states
- So, when seen as a graph, HMMs have two kinds of nodes and two kinds of edges
 - Hidden states and observations
 - Transitional probabilities and emission probabilities
- The hidden states and transitional probabilities represent the latent structure that “sits behind” the observed phenomena



A formal definition of the Hidden Markov Model (HMM)

- $Q = q_1, \dots, q_N$ a set of N **states**
- $A = a_{1,1}, a_{1,2}, \dots$ a **transitional probability matrix** of cells a_{ij} , where each cell is a probability of moving from state i to state j .
 $\sum_{j=1}^N a_{ij} = 1 \forall i$
- $O = o_1, \dots, o_T$ a **sequence of T observations**, each drawn from a vocabulary V .
- $B = b_1, \dots, b_n$ a sequence of observation likelihoods (or **emission probabilities**). The probability that observation o_t is generated by state q_i .
- $\pi = \pi_1, \dots, \pi_N$ an **initial probability distribution** over states (the probability that the Markov chain will start in state q_i . Some states q_j may have $p_j = 0$ (meaning they cannot be initial states). $\sum_{i=1}^N \pi_i = 1 \forall i$

HMMs Assume the Markov Assumption and Output Independence

Like Markov Chains, HMMs require the Markov Assumption:

$$p(q_i|q_1\dots q_{i-1}) = P(q_i|q_{i-1})$$

The further assume that the observed outputs depend only upon the state
(**Output Independence**)

$$P(o_i|q_1, \dots, q_i, \dots, q_T, o_1, \dots, o_i, \dots, o_T) = P(o_i|q_i)$$

Where q_1, \dots, q_T are the states at each time step and o_1, \dots, o_T are the outputs at each time step. In other words:

- The preceding or following states do not matter (we assume)
- The preceding or following outputs do not matter (we assume)

We can use Bayes' Rule to pick the right hidden POS tags

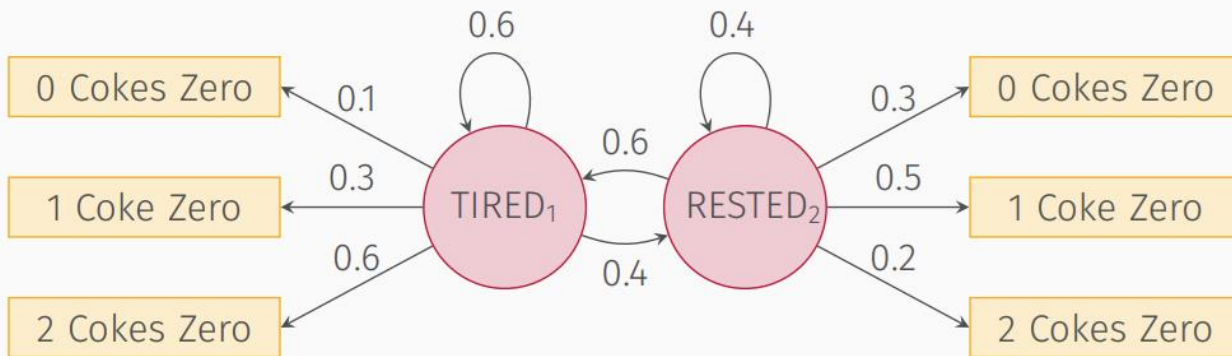
$$\hat{t}_1^n = \operatorname{argmax}_{t_1^n} P(t_1^n | w_1^n) \approx \operatorname{argmax}_{t_1^n} \prod_{i=1}^n P(w_i | t_i) P(t_i | t_{i-1})$$

For timestep 1 through n :

- t_1 : the hidden state at timestep 1
- w_1 : the observed word at timestep 1

The Coke Zero Example

Since I do not drink coffee, I must drink Coke Zero to remain caffeinated. My consumption is related to my exhaustion. Could you build a model to infer my exhaustion from the number of Coke Zero bottles added to my wastebasket each day?



$$\pi = [0.7, 0.3]$$

Conclusion

- Parts of speech are grammatical classes of words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives
- Part of speech (POS) tagging assigns a part of speech to every input word in context
- Named entity recognition (NER) is the task of identifying named entities like people, locations, and organizations
- NER can be framed as a sequence labeling task with a BIO framework
- HMMs can be used for sequence labeling tasks like POS tagging and NER
- Key parameters of HMMs are transition and emission probabilities

Questions?