

# Neural Semantic Parsing with Extremely Rich Symbolic Meaning Representations

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*Current open-domain neural semantics parsers show impressive performance. However, closer inspection of the symbolic meaning representations they produce reveals significant weaknesses: Sometimes they tend to merely copy character sequences from the source text to form symbolic concepts, defaulting to the most frequent word sense based in the training distribution. By leveraging the hierarchical structure of a lexical ontology, we introduce a novel compositional symbolic representation for concepts based on their position in the taxonomical hierarchy. This representation provides richer semantic information and enhances interpretability. We introduce a neural “taxonomical” semantic parser to utilize this new representation system of predicates, and compare it with a standard neural semantic parser trained on the traditional meaning representation format, employing a novel challenge set and evaluation metric for evaluation. Our experimental findings demonstrate that the taxonomical model, trained on much richer and complex meaning representations, is slightly subordinate in performance to the traditional model using the standard metrics for evaluation, but outperforms it when dealing with out-of-vocabulary concepts. We further show through neural model probing that training on a taxonomic representation enhances the model’s ability to learn the taxonomical hierarchy. This finding is encouraging for research in computational semantics that aims to combine data-driven distributional meanings with knowledge-based symbolic representations.*

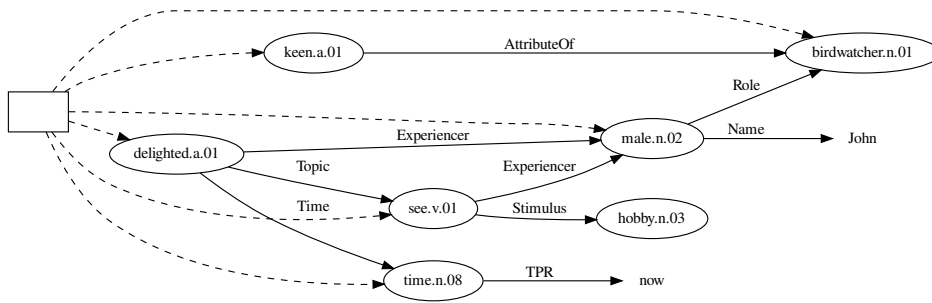
## 1. Introduction

The task of formal semantic parsing is to map natural language expressions (words, sentences, and texts) to unambiguous interpretable formal meaning representations. The components of these meaning representations can be divided into two parts: the domain-independent logical symbols (such as negation  $\neg$ , conjunction  $\wedge$ , disjunction  $\vee$ , equality  $=$ , and the quantifiers  $\exists$ ,  $\forall$ ), and the non-logical symbols (the concepts and relations between them—the predicates), possibly tailored to a specific domain. It is the latter component that forms the focus of this article, as we see several shortcomings in the way predicates are represented in mainstream computational semantics, since this is usually done by combining a lemma, part-of-speech tag, and sense number. This

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**Figure 1**

Graphical display of a meaning representation for the sentence *John, a keen birdwatcher, was delighted to see a hobby* in the style of the Parallel Meaning Bank. Oval nodes represent concepts, boxed nodes introduce contexts, and labeled edges denote thematic roles or semantic relations.

representation of concepts is not only language-specific, but also doesn't exploit the power of pre-trained language models used in neural approaches, currently the state of the art in semantic parsing (Bai, Chen, and Zhang 2022; Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022; Wang et al. 2023).

We illustrate this issue with an example. Figure 1 shows a meaning representation in the form of a directed acyclic graph, as is common in currently used frameworks in computational semantics (Allen, Swift, and de Beaumont 2008; Banarescu et al. 2013; Oepen et al. 2020a; Abzianidze, Bos, and Oepen 2020; Bos 2023). The nodes represent concepts that are symbolized by the lemmas of the content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) that triggered them. As content words are often polysemous, they are usually disambiguated using one of the standard lexical ontologies, including WordNet (Fellbaum 1998), OntoNotes (Hovy et al. 2006), VerbNet (Bonial et al. 2011), and BabelNet (Navigli and Ponzetto 2012). This can be done by adding a part-of-speech sign and sense number suffix to the symbol, and is mainstream practice across a wide spectrum of semantic formalisms, such as Abstract Meaning Representation (AMR) (Banarescu et al. 2013), BabelNet Meaning Representation (BMR) (Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022), Discourse Representation Structure (DRS) (Bos et al. 2017), Prague Tectogrammatical Graphs (PTG) (Zeman and Hajič et al. 2020), and Elementary Dependency Structure (EDS) (Oepen and Lønning 2006). However, the (interrelated) problems that we observe with this approach are the following:

- The representations of concepts are usually not normalized: They are represented in various ways based on synonym lemmas of the same language or translated lemmas for other languages;
- The predicate symbols possess minimal or no inherent semantic structure. This makes it impossible to determine how they are related to other predicates without access to external knowledge bases;
- The predicate symbols are essentially atomic. Yet, a neural network's tokenizer will typically break down the symbols into meaningless sequences of characters to reduce the size of its vocabulary.

The first problem can be illustrated with a simple example. Consider the English synonyms *car* and *automobile*. In most current approaches, their concepts would be represented with different predicate symbols (e.g., *car.n.01* and *automobile.n.01*, following WordNet), even though they share the same lexical meaning. For non-English lexicalizations for this concept, for instance Italian *macchina* or French *voiture*, one could opt to use English-based predicate symbols (as is done by Abzianidze et al. 2017) or use a multi-lingual lexical ontology (Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022), but these solutions don't apply any kind of normalization: The same meaning is represented by different predicate symbols.

The second problem has risen more to the foreground with the rise of distributional semantics to capture word meanings. While certain predicate symbols exhibit an accidental internal structure that provides additional insight about them (e.g., *black-bird.n.01* is a kind of *bird.n.01*), for most symbols, it is not possible to determine, without external resources, that *dog.n.01* is closely related to and compatible with *animal.n.01* or *puppy.n.01*. This is in stark contrast with semantics based on embeddings where meanings are represented by large vectors based on their contextual occurrences in corpora (Mikolov, Yih, and Zweig 2013). Some attempts have already been made to close the gap between semantic networks and semantic spaces (Rothe and Schütze 2015; Saedi et al. 2018; Scarlini, Pasini, and Navigli 2020a; Lees et al. 2020).

The third problem is perhaps more of a theoretical issue, with the desire to use a clean and sound methodology for composing meanings. From an engineering point of view, what happens under the hood of a semantic parser isn't that important as long as it produces satisfactory accuracy scores. However, a clear disadvantage is that predicted concepts are not guaranteed to exist in the external knowledge base (e.g., WordNet).

These three problems were not particularly pressing in the past or considered problematic, perhaps mainly because word sense disambiguation was seen as a separate task in the sequential symbolic pipeline of traditional semantic parsing. However, the advent of neural methods in semantic processing has magnified these concerns. Neural networks, due to their statistical nature, are confined to their training data distribution, and are therefore struggling in understanding and generating out-of-distribution concepts (Johnson et al. 2017; Lake and Baroni 2017; Kim and Linzen 2020; Li et al. 2023; Groschwitz et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2024). Additionally, neural networks tend to find typographical correspondences between the input words and output concepts (Edman et al. 2024), thereby copying from the input which, we argue, artificially inflates parsing performance scores. Nevertheless, we believe that pre-trained language models possess the capability to comprehend the semantics of unseen words and concepts within context, but the current representations used in semantic parsing form an obstacle to exploit it.

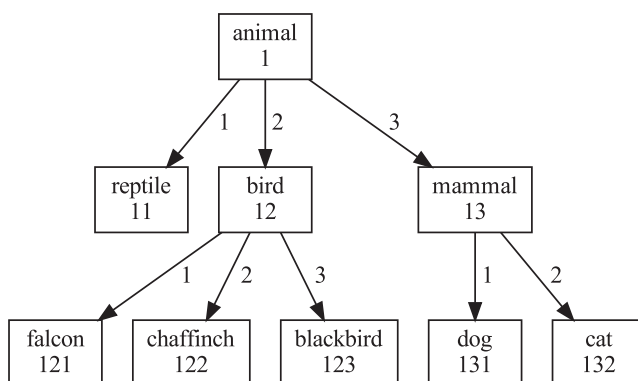
The following scenario illustrates this issue. Consider a neural semantic parser trained on a corpus that pairs English sentences with meanings that encode concepts in the standard symbolic format based on a lemma and a sense number. We give this parser the sentence in Figure 1 about birdwatcher John who spotted a hobby, a rare type of falcon. Assume that the word *hobby* is not in the training data at all. It is very likely that this kind of parser would associate the word *hobby* with the incorrect concept *hobby.n.01*, the "spare-time activity" sense, because it learned how to lemmatize from other examples and the suffix "n.01" appears to be the most frequent noun sense. By chance, the parser could produce the correct concept *hobby.n.03* (the bird sense), maybe because the suffix "n.03" is often associated with lemmas that end in "by." In our view, we don't want to develop semantic parsers that make a *wild guess* for unknown concepts. Instead, we would like to develop semantic parsers that make an *educated guess*: perhaps it could

come up with a concept that it has seen during training, for example, *bird.n.01* or even *falcon.n.01* that appears in a similar context as the sentence it tries to parse. In this article, we introduce and evaluate a method for integrating pre-trained language models with symbolic meaning representations that utilize taxonomical encodings.

## 2. Taxonomical Encodings

In the approach we follow, we radically deviate from the view of representing non-logical symbols based on lemmas, part-of-speech tags, and sense numbers. Instead we introduce a way to encode concepts and relations with internally structured blocks of meaning based on external lexical ontologies or taxonomies. These predicate symbols are not directly interpretable for human beings as they do not correspond to units of language. For instance, the taxonomical encodings for *cat* and *dog* share a common prefix that tells us that both are of the category *mammal*. The encodings for adjectives like *good* and *bad* will be very similar, with the only difference indicating that they are antonyms. The idea, illustrated in Figure 2, draws inspiration from methods in image classification (Mukherjee, Garg, and Roy 2021; Bertinetto et al. 2020).

Our research questions are the following. First of all, how can we take existing lexical ontologies as a starting point to encode symbols for concepts (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) in a compositional way? Second, are current neural models actually capable of learning these abstract symbols that have no direct connection with any surface form of language, without reducing parsing performance too much? Furthermore, how can we intuitively assess the model's understanding of the hierarchy of concepts, and does the model trained on taxonomical encodings demonstrate a superior performance? Finally, do taxonomical encodings of concepts give the semantic parser the ability to make sense of out-of-distribution concepts by assigning a meaning that is compatible with or close to the ground truth, rather than producing a symbol based on the lemma of the word and hoping for the best? In other words, can the parser make an *educated guess* based on distributional meaning rather than on superficial features when it encounters word meanings that it has never seen before, taking advantage of pre-trained language models?



**Figure 2**

Simple illustration of a taxonomical encoding. Each box denotes a concept within a typical ontological ISA (Investigation, Study, Assay) hierarchy. The longer the encoding, the more specific its concepts are.

Our work’s primary contribution lies in presenting a taxonomy-based approach to meaning representation, which is very distinct from prior methods. Accordingly, we connect symbolic and neural techniques in a semantic parsing system. It is *symbolic* because the semantic parser generates interpretable and transparent meaning representations. It is *neural* because it harnesses the power of distributional meaning models and neural networks to enhance robustness in unexpected circumstances. A direct consequence of our new approach to semantic parsing is that current evaluation methods, which are based on graph matching, are not sufficient for our purposes, as comparing concepts will be beyond simple string matching and needs to be based and implemented using semantic rather than syntactic similarity. Hence, to assess the capabilities to deal with out-of-vocabulary concepts, we have developed a new challenge test and new semantic evaluation tools. Furthermore, we probe the embeddings of concepts within neural models to evaluate the encoded taxonomical information. Our experiments reveal that our new representation-based parser performs comparably to the original representation in standard tests but excels in predicting unknown concepts on challenge sets. Additionally, the probing tests indicate that neural models trained with the new representation learn more taxonomical information compared to the original representation.

### 3. Background and Related Work

#### 3.1 Semantic Parsing

Early approaches to semantic parsing were mostly based on rule-based systems with compositional semantics defined on top of a syntactic structure obtained by a parser (Woods 1973; Hendrix et al. 1977; Templeton and Burger 1983). The development of syntactic treebanks contributed to the creation of robust statistical syntactic parsers, thereby facilitating semantic parsing with broad coverage (Bos et al. 2004). The emergence of neural methodologies and the availability of extensive semantically annotated datasets (Banarescu et al. 2013; Bos et al. 2017; Abzianidze et al. 2017) marked a shift in semantic parsing techniques, diminishing the emphasis on syntactic analysis (Barzdins and Gosko 2016; van Noord and Bos 2017; Bevilacqua, Biloshmi, and Navigli 2021). The introduction of pre-trained language models within the sequence-to-sequence framework led to further enhancements in parsing accuracy (Samuel and Straka 2020; Shou and Lin 2021; Lee et al. 2021; Bevilacqua, Biloshmi, and Navigli 2021; Lee et al. 2022; Bai, Chen, and Zhang 2022; Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022; Wang et al. 2023).

Various meaning representations have been the target for semantic parsing—for excellent recent overviews, see Oepen et al. (2020b) and Sadeddine, Opitz, and Suchanek (2024). Dominating the field of semantic parsing is AMR, facilitated by the large supply of annotated data and the simplicity of its meaning structures, that are based on simple directed acyclic graphs. There are various extensions proposed to enrich AMR. These are, among others, BMR, which incorporates multi-lingual semantic resources (Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022), and Uniform Meaning Representation (UMR), which includes discourse level phenomena (Gysel et al. 2021). In this work we focus on DRS, a richer meaning representation, a semantic formalism that drew substantial interest in computational semantics (Bos et al. 2004; Evang and Bos 2016; van Noord et al. 2018b; van Noord, Toral, and Bos 2019; Evang 2019; Liu, Cohen, and Lapata 2019; van Noord, Toral, and Bos 2020; Wang et al. 2021; Poelman, van Noord, and Bos 2022; Wang et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2024).

### 3.2 Evaluating Semantic Parsing

A common way of evaluating semantic parsing is to compare parser output with a gold standard using graph overlap (Allen, Swift, and de Beaumont 2008; Cai and Knight 2013; van Noord et al. 2018a). A well-known implementation is Smatch (semantic match), which measures the structural similarity by mapping graphs into triples and determining the maximum amount of triples that are shared by two semantic graphs, computed by taking the harmonic mean of precision and recall of matching triples (Cai and Knight 2013). Smatch is mostly used to assess AMR parsing, but not exclusively, and Poelman, van Noord, and Bos (2022) adopt it for DRS parsing. The original Smatch implements matching of semantic material without further nuances, so several variations and extensions of Smatch have been developed to enhance semantic evaluation (Damonte, Cohen, and Satta 2017; Cai and Lam 2019; Opitz, Parcalabescu, and Frank 2020; Wein and Schneider 2022; Opitz 2023).

Cai and Lam (2019) argue that more weight should be given to triples that form the core of the meaning expressed by a semantic graph. They propose a variant of Smatch that takes root distance into account by reducing the significance of triple matches that are further away from the root of the graph (Cai and Lam 2019). In the meaning representations of our choice, DRS, there is no designated root, so we cannot adopt this variant of Smatch straightaway. Although we think the idea of giving more importance to triples that form the core of the meaning expressed by a text is interesting, we believe more research is required to establish what exactly constitutes this and we therefore will consider this outside the scope of this article.

Opitz, Parcalabescu, and Frank (2020) argue that the “hard” matching of Smatch is not always justified and propose  $S^2$ Match (soft similarity match), by implementing a graded semantic match of concepts with the help of a distance function that computes a number between 0 and 1. The distance function can be anything that fulfills its purpose. Opitz, Parcalabescu, and Frank (2020) showcase their idea using GloVe embeddings to obtain a similarity score between lemmas. Wein and Schneider (2022) propose LaBSE embeddings (Feng et al. 2022) to compute the similarity between two concepts in different languages for cross-lingual comparison of meaning representations. However, these choices of distance functions ignore scenarios where different concepts are expressed by the same lemma. We embrace the use of  $S^2$ Match in our work but will replace the distance function by an operation that measures the ontological distance between two concepts or relations.

### 3.3 WordNet

We make heavy use of the lexical ontology WordNet, a handcrafted electronic dictionary (Fellbaum 1998). In WordNet, words are organized around **synsets**, that is, sets of words that have similar meanings. A synset consists of one or more words; an ambiguous word (a word with more than one *sense*) is placed into several synsets, one for each distinct meaning. Synsets are connected to each other by several semantic relations (see below). Each synset has a unique identifier, a 9-digit number based on the byte offset in the WordNet database, where the first number identifies the part of speech.

The original WordNet was designed for English (Fellbaum 1998). Subsequent efforts have been undertaken to establish WordNets for various languages and to develop multilingual lexical resources (Navigli and Ponzetto 2012; Vossen 1998; Bond and Foster 2013), or to include WordNet into a formal ontology (Gangemi et al. 2003) and to

integrate it with Wikipedia (Suchanek, Kasneci, and Weikum 2008; Speer, Chin, and Havasi 2017).

Only parts of speech of content words are included in WordNet: nouns (n), verbs (v), adjectives (a), and adverbs (r). There are several ways to refer to a specific synset: by using the unique identifier, or, more commonly, by a combination of lemma, part of speech, and sense number of one of its members. For instance, the English noun *hobby* is placed into three synsets in Princeton's WordNet for English: the first sense, *hobby.n.01*, is glossed as "an auxiliary activity," and two of its other synset members are *pursuit.n.03* and *avocation.n.01*; *hobby.n.02* denotes the sense of plaything for children, and *hobby.n.03* refers to the bird of prey with the scientific name *Falco subbuteo*.

The power of WordNet manifests itself by the relations between synsets that it offers. The hypernym and hyponym relations connect generic with specific synsets. For instance, the direct hypernym of *hobby.n.03* is *falcon.n.01*. Synsets that share the same hypernym are called co-hyponyms. For example, *hobby.n.03* and *peregrine.n.01* are co-hyponyms, as they are both falcons. Verbs are similarly organized in WordNet, but the term *troponym* is used instead of hyponym to indicate a more fine-grained sense of a verb. For instance, *falcon.v.01* is a troponym of *hunt.v.01*. Some verbs are related to other verbs via the *entailment* relation, for example, *oversleep.v.01* entails *sleep.v.01*, and some verbs have derivationally related forms corresponding to nouns, for example, *hunt.v.01* is related to *hunt.n.08*.

Adjectives and adverbs are quite differently inserted into WordNet than nouns and verbs are. Adjectives are arranged by falling into one of the categories of *head* and *satellite*, the former playing a more pivotal role, and the latter a specialization of a certain adjective. For some adjectives, there exists the *antonym* relation between synsets of head adjectives, indicating opposite meanings. For instance, *good.a.01* and *bad.a.01* are antonyms, with satellites *cracking.a.01*, *superb.a.02*, among others, for the former, and *awful.a.01* and *terrible.a.02* (among many others) for the latter. Some adjectives are connected to attribute nouns, for example, *fast.a.01* has the attribute synset *speed.n.02*. Adjectives are also connected to their derivationally related forms of verbs and nouns. Some adverbs are connected to adjective by the *pertainym* relation, for example, *quickly.r.01* is a pertainym of *quick.a.01*. However, there are several adverbs that have no connection with other synsets in WordNet.

The structure of WordNet triggered various proposals to calculate some kind of similarity score between two concepts. Resnik (1995) proposed a similarity metric based on the notion of information content, which requires an external corpus to calculate the frequencies of concepts. The Leacock-Chodorow similarity calculates similarity based on the hypernym/hyponym path length between synsets (Leacock and Chodorow 1998). Wu and Palmer (1994) propose a similar way to compute the conceptual distance between synsets, but include both the depth of the concepts in the WordNet hierarchy and their least common subsumer (LCS; i.e., the first hypernym they share). The Wu-Palmer Score (WPS, Equation (1)), is the metric we adopt because it is easy to implement and independent of the depth of the hierarchy.

$$\text{WPS} = 2 * \frac{\text{depth}(\text{LCS}(s_1, s_2))}{\text{depth}(s_1) + \text{depth}(s_2)} \quad (1)$$

For instance, the WPS of the first and third (semantically unrelated) senses of the noun *hobby* is low:  $\text{WPS}(\text{hobby.n.01}, \text{hobby.n.03}) = 0.087$ , whereas the similarity between hobby (the bird) and falcon is high:  $\text{WPS}(\text{falcon.n.01}, \text{hobby.n.03}) = 0.963$ . Note that the similarity metrics mentioned are grounded in WordNet's taxonomy and typically

are most appropriate for noun comparisons, and less so for other parts of speech. In Section 4, we delve into the distinct taxonomies of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in WordNet. These structural differences lead to inaccuracies in measuring concept similarity for non-noun categories using the existing WordNet taxonomy. To address this issue, we calculate the similarity using the taxonomy encodings described in Section 4 instead of using the original WordNet taxonomy.

One could also view our taxonomical encoding as a vector, and apply cosine similarity for assessing the similarity between two concepts. However, we won't get the nuances that we need if we follow this approach. This is because cosine similarity would not take the position of the element within the vector into account, thereby overlooking the inherent hierarchical structure of our taxonomical encodings. For instance, considering Figure 2, the cosine similarity for "falcon" and "chaffinch" would be the same as that for "falcon" and "dog," and this is not what we would expect, as the former pair of concepts is more similar than the latter.

### 3.4 Non-logical Symbols, Concepts, and Word Senses

Symbolic meaning representations consist of the logical and non-logical parts. The non-logical symbols, the predicates and relations, define the concepts in the domain of interest. Here we assume an open-domain approach where nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are mapped to predicates taken from an ontology, proper names<sup>1</sup> and numbers are mapped to literals, and prepositions and implicit arguments are mapped to an inventory of roles and relations.

In NLP, distinct formats for non-logical symbols (also known as *predicate symbols*) have been adopted, ranging from words, lemmas, a combination of a lemma and a sense number, to entries in a lexical ontology. In AMR (Kingsbury and Palmer 2002), predicate symbols are only partially disambiguated. Some symbols are derived from PropBank framesets and formatted as lemma-sense (e.g., see-01) but most predicates do not include senses and are simply represented by their corresponding lemma. BMR (Martínez Lorenzo, Maru, and Navigli 2022) follows the graph structure of AMR but the predicates are encoded by leveraging the multilingual semantic network of BabelNet, interpreting the non-logical symbols from WordNet, Wikipedia, and other resources. In the DRS representation of the Parallel Meaning Bank (PMB) (Abzianidze et al. 2017), predicates for noun, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs follow the corresponding WordNet synsets and adhere strictly to the lemma-pos-sense format (see Figure 1).

Hence, one important subtask of semantic parsing is Word Sense Disambiguation (WSD), the process of identifying the appropriate meaning of a word within its context. Traditionally, this is approached as a classification task with the goal of selecting the correct sense from a set of predefined sense inventories (Bevilacqua et al. 2021). In contrast, the task of concept prediction in semantic parsing is treating WSD as a generative task. Here, semantic parsers are expected to generate the correct word sense without being given the inventories of senses. This presents a significant challenge, as it is considered currently "impossible" to accurately generate word senses without external knowledge sources, particularly when the word senses have not been encountered in the training data (Groschwitz et al. 2023).

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1 Named entity linking and grounding is an important part of semantic processing, but is outside the scope of this article and not relevant for meeting our research objectives.



In the case of semantic parsing, the sense number system acts as an instrument for sense prediction. However, numbering senses is fairly arbitrary, only constrained by the tendency that senses encountered frequently in corpora get assigned a low sense number. Consequently, for concepts not encountered in the training data, predicting whether a word corresponds to sense number 3, 4, or 5 holds no distinguishable difference: The best strategy to use for a WSD component would be choosing a low sense number, like 1 or 2. Our new representation for concepts presented in Section 4 addresses this issue by refraining from using sense numbers and instead incorporating taxonomical information in concept representation.

### 3.5 Sense Embeddings

The aim of this article is to develop and evaluate a new way of representing concepts and incorporating them into formal meaning representations of natural language sentences. Another way of representing concepts are **sense embeddings**, pre-trained vectors extracted from a neural model, usually based on language models trained on a corpus with labeled word senses. Various approaches have been introduced to generate sense embeddings. AutoExtend (Rothe and Schütze 2015) derives synset and lexeme embeddings from word embeddings. Context-AwaRe Embeddings of Senses (Scarlina, Pasini, and Navigli 2020b) uses a semi-supervised approach to producing sense embeddings for the lexical meanings within a lexical knowledge base. SensEmBERT (Scarlina, Pasini, and Navigli 2020a) uses an approach by combing the power of the language modeling and the knowledge contained in a semantic network. Pre-trained sense embeddings are known to improve word sense disambiguation<sup>9</sup> (Oele and van Noord 2018; Bevilacqua and Navigli 2020).

However, due to their size and floating point numbers, pre-trained sense embeddings are (obviously) not directly appropriate to be explicitly part of a formal meaning representation such as the one shown in Figure 1. One option would be to compress the embeddings (Andrews 2015) and transform the numbers into integers, but this solution falls outside the objectives of this article. Hence, although we will not explore the use of pre-trained sense embeddings to improve semantic parsing, in Section 6 we will compare them with the sense embeddings extracted from the semantic parsing models that we develop to get an idea how well they reflect the taxonomical hierarchy encoded by WordNet.

### 3.6 Discourse Representation Structures

In order to run our experiments we need a reasonably sized annotated corpus of sentences and their meaning representations. Several such annotated corpora are available for AMR (Banarescu et al. 2013), and the majority of current semantic parsing methods are developed using AMR datasets. However, for our purposes, we are not able to make use of these linguistic resources because only part of the non-logical symbols (predicates) are disambiguated in AMR, as we outlined in the previous section.<sup>2</sup>

Instead, we will work with a variant of DRS, the meaning representation proposed in Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp and Reyle 1993). The PMB offers a large

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<sup>2</sup> A quick calculation on the AMR 2017 corpus revealed that about 60% of the predicates are not sense-disambiguated. Most of these are predicates for nouns.

$x_1$	$x_2$	$x_3$	$s_1$	$s_2$	$e_1$	$x_4$
male.n.02( $x_1$ )	Name( $x_1$ , "John")					
keen.a.01( $s_1$ )	AttributeOf( $s_1, x_3$ )					
person.n.01( $x_2$ )	$x_2 = x_1$ Role( $x_2, x_3$ )					
birdwatcher.n.01( $x_3$ )						
delighted.a.01( $s_2$ )	Experiencer( $s_2, x_1$ ) Topic( $s_2, e_1$ )					
see.v.01( $e_1$ )	Experiencer( $e_1, x_1$ ) Stimulus( $e_1, x_4$ )					
hobby.n.03( $x_4$ )						

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male.n.02 Name "John"
keen.a.01 AttributeOf +2
person.n.01 EQU -2 Role +1
birdwatcher.n.01
delighted.a.01 Experiencer -3 Topic +1
see.v.01 Experiencer -1 Stimulus +1
hobby.n.03
    
```

**Figure 3**

Discourse Representation Structure for a sentence shown in box format (left) and sequence notation (right). The corresponding graph for this DRS is shown in Figure 1.

corpus of sentences paired with DRSs with concepts represented by WordNet synsets and a neo-Davidsonian event semantics with VerbNet-inspired thematic roles.

The formal language of DRS consists of discourse referents and DRS conditions. DRS conditions are predicates applied to discourse referents, relations between discourse referents or literals, or comparison statements (i.e., equality, approximation, temporal precedence; see Appendix C). DRSs are recursive data structures; complex DRSs can be constructed to express negation, conjunction, and discourse relations.

An example DRS in box format, the equivalent for the meaning representation graph in Figure 1, is shown on the left in Figure 3. However, in our experiments in Section 6, we will use neither of these formats when training our semantic parsing models. Instead, we will use the sequence notation for DRS where variables are replaced by De Bruijnian indices (Bos 2023). The sequence notation is a convenient way for training neural semantic parsers that are based on seq2seq architectures, because there are variables names and a minimal amount of punctuation symbols. Our running example in sequence notation is shown on the right in Figure 3.

#### 4. Encoding Concepts and Relations

There are four parts of speech in WordNet, all with a different ontological organization. Therefore, we describe for each category how we compute its taxonomical encodings. These encodings will be our new way to represent concepts in a formal meaning representation and used to improve semantic parsing. We use Princeton WordNet version 3.0 (Fellbaum 1998), compatible with the PMB.

##### 4.1 Nouns

For the encoding of nouns we will make use of the WordNet hyponym-hypernym relation between synsets. Each noun synset has one or more hypernyms, except *entity.n.01*, which therefore represents the most general synset. For noun synsets with more than one synset (i.e., indicating multiple inheritance) we consider just one of the possible hypernyms.

This procedure maps all the noun synsets to one large ISA-hierarchy with the top node *entity.n.01*. Given a synset within this obtained hierarchy, we give each direct hyponym-hypernym edge a label (a single ASCII character, excluding the zero "0"), ensuring that the labels for each co-hyponyms are all distinct.<sup>3</sup> Once we have done this

<sup>3</sup> In cases where concepts exhibit multiple inheritances, we choose the first hypernym path.

**Table 1**

Snapshot of generated taxonomy encodings for a group of related noun synsets. Synonyms receive the same encodings, hyponyms get encodings that are more specific (less zeroes).

WordNet synset member	WordNet ID	Taxonomical encoding
entity.n.01	100001740	n1000000000000000000000
food.n.01	100021265	n1233100000000000000000
beverage.n.01	107881800	n1233110000000000000000
drink.n.03	107881800	n1233110000000000000000
alcoholic_drink.n.01	107884567	n1233111000000000000000
alcohol.n.01	107884567	n1233111000000000000000
brew.n.01	107886572	n1233111100000000000000
beer.n.01	107886849	n1233111110000000000000
booze.n.01	107901587	n1233111200000000000000
brandy.n.01	107903208	n1233111210000000000000

for each edge, we can read off a unique sequence of labels for each synset. The maximum length of this sequence is the maximum depth of hyponym-hypernym links in WordNet. We pad encodings with trailing zeroes in order to give each synset encoding the same length.<sup>4</sup> The number of different labels that we need corresponds to the maximum of co-hyponyms for a synset in WordNet.

Table 1 gives a snapshot of how this labeling works. The resulting taxonomical code gives us a symbolic representation that groups similar concepts (i.e., synsets) together based on their internal structure. The more labels that they share from left-to-right in the encoding, the more they have in common. The more zeroes an encoding has, the more general its synsets is. To distinguish noun synsets from other parts of speech, we attach the prefix “n” to the encoding.

**4.2 Verbs**

For verb synsets we follow essentially the same procedure as for nouns presented in the previous section making use of the troponym and entailment relations available in WordNet. However, the hierarchy of verbs is much flatter than that of nouns, resulting in too many top nodes (synsets without hypernym). For verb synsets without a hypernym, we create edges to noun synset to which they are derivationally related, as shown in Table 2. For noun synsets inserted in this way, we expand the hierarchy as we did for nouns. To distinguish verb concepts from noun-derived concepts, we attach the prefix “v” to it.

**4.3 Adjectives and Adverbs**

For adjective synsets (Table 3) we create a hierarchical link between satellites and their heads. The head adjectives will be related to noun synsets using derivationally related verb or noun synsets or attribute nouns. To distinguish the adjective encodings, we attach the prefix “a” to it. Antonyms receive the same encodings but are decorated

<sup>4</sup> Initial experiments comparing with padded and non-padded encodings reveal that models with padding outperform those without. We also experimented with pruning the encodings, removing nodes in the hierarchy that are non-branching and do not appear in the data. But this idea also yielded worse results.

**Table 2**

Snapshot of generated taxonomy encodings that link verb synsets to a noun synset.

WordNet synset member	WordNet Id	Taxonomical encoding
change_of_integrity.n.01	100376063	n1111211500000000000000
separation.n.09	100383606	n1111211510000000000000
removal.n.01	100391599	n1111211511000000000000
get_rid_of.v.01	202224055	v1111211511100000000000
throw_away.v.01	202222318	v1111211511110000000000
abandon.v.01	202228031	v1111211511111000000000
dump.v.02	202224945	v1111211511120000000000

**Table 3**

Snapshot of generated taxonomy encodings that link adjective and adverb synsets to a noun synset. Encodings for adjectives and adverbs have an additional suffix encoding polarity.

WordNet synset member	WordNet Id	Taxonomical encoding
speed.n.02	105058140	n1133A31000000000000000
fast.a.01	300976508	a1133A31100000000000000+
fast.r.01	400086000	r1133A31100000000000000+
lazy.a.01	300981304	a1133A31121000000000000-
slow.a.01	300980527	a1133A31120000000000000-
slowly.r.01	400161630	r1133A31120000000000000-
quick.a.01	300979366	a1133A31130000000000000+
haste.n.01	105060189	n1133A31300000000000000
abruptness.n.03	105060476	n1133A31310000000000000
sudden.a.01	301143279	a1133A31311000000000000
all_of_a_sudden.r.02	400061677	r1133A31311000000000000
suddenly.r.01	400061677	r1133A31311000000000000

with a positive or negative suffix.<sup>5</sup> WordNet doesn't provide information whether an antonym is positive or negative, so we use a simple heuristic to check the prefix of the adjective's lemma (im-, non-, un-)—see van Son, van Miltenburg, and Morante (2016) and Blanco and Moldovan (2010). Adverbs are linked to adjectives via the pertainym relation and receive the same encoding but with the prefix "r."

#### 4.4 Roles, Operators, and Discourse Relations

The meaning representations that we use follow a neo-Davidsonian way of representing events (Parsons 1990), where events are related to their participants by a close set of thematic roles, namely, Agent, Theme, Patient, Result, and so on. The inventory of roles is an extension of the hierarchical set proposed in VerbNet (Bonial et al. 2011), extended with roles used in the Parallel Meaning Bank. The elaboration of the complete taxonomy of these roles is outlined in Appendix B. There are also roles to connect non-event entities, for instance those appearing in genitive constructions or noun compounds.

<sup>5</sup> When calculating the Wu-Palmer similarity between adjectives/adverbs, this suffix is moved to the end of the last non-zero character.



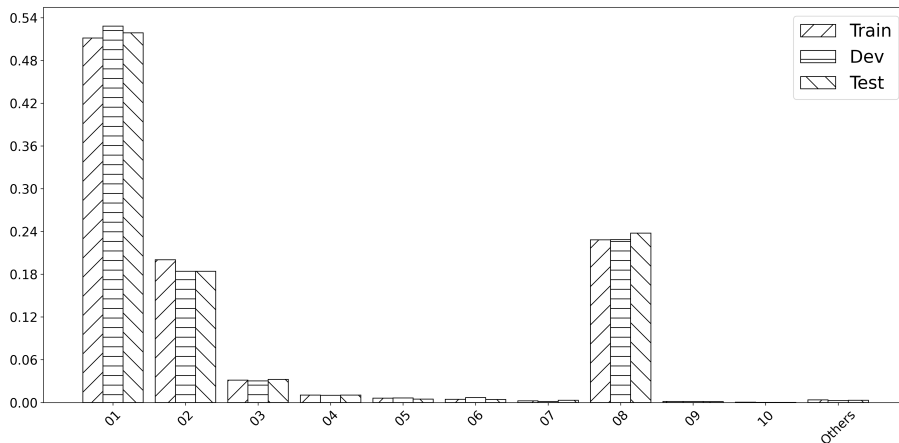
2. We not only allow soft matching based on the Wu-Palmer Score for instance triples, but also for role triples;
3. In the implementation of Smatch, triples featuring TOP were discarded since DRS, unlike AMR, does not contain roots.

In the rest of this article we refer to these alterations of Smatch and  $S^2$ Match as Hard Smatch and Soft Smatch, respectively. Note that the Wu-Palmer distance based on the standard WordNet taxonomy struggles with accurately measuring the distance for verbs, adjectives, and adverbs because these parts of speech have less hierarchical structure and are sometimes unconnected. To overcome this limitation, we measure the distance with the generated encodings discussed in Section 4, enabling a more precise computation of Wu-Palmer similarity.

### 5.2 Creating a Challenge Set for Out-of-Distribution Concepts

One of our research objectives is to make a model that is able to come up with a reasonable interpretation of a concept that it has never encountered during training. The Parallel Meaning Bank offers training, development, and test sets, all featuring similar distributions (Figure 4). The PMB data indicates that concepts are frequently used with the first word sense. This is not very surprising, because WordNet tends to list the most used senses first for each word.

This poses the following problem to meet our research objective. Say we give the model for semantic parsing a sentence with an unknown word (a word that the model hasn't seen during training). The model will likely transform it into a WordNet concept with sense number 1, based on the statistics seen on training. Hence, the chance that the model got it correct is very high. But does such a model demonstrate some kind of



**Figure 4** Distribution of word senses in the different data splits of the Parallel Meaning Bank. Note that except sense “01,” sense “02” is prominent because every person’s name incorporates either the *female.n.02* or *male.n.02* and “08” also stands out because every meaning for a tensed clause includes the *time.n.08* concept.

semantic understanding? Not really—it just produced a pattern that it has seen many, many times during training.

In this case, we need to evaluate capability of dealing with rare or unseen word senses. We do this by creating a challenge test set consisting of more than a hundred English sentences and their gold standard meaning representations, where each sentence contains one or more words (nouns, verbs, or adjectives) that are not part of the training and development set, or are present in the training set with a different sense. To ensure an insightful evaluation, we make certain that the corresponding meaning for these unknown concepts do not correspond to the first sense. As a source of inspiration we use the glosses and example sentences found in WordNet for a particular word sense, and add enough context to disambiguate the meaning of the word. For instance, in “the moon is waxing,” we have the third sense for the verb, resulting in the concept *wax.v.03*, not seen in training (although *wax.v.01* could be part of the training data). For each concept we construct three sentences in which the concept is expressed with enough context for a human to understand the intended meaning.

The entire challenge set comprises 500 example sentences paired with their meaning representation in SBN format, containing 430 unknown nouns, 128 unknown verbs, and 65 unknown adjectives/adverbs. We verified and manually corrected the annotations when needed to guarantee their gold-standard quality. In Table 9 in Section 6, we showcase some examples along with the predictions of different parsers.

### 5.3 Designing a Taxonomy-based Semantic Parsing Architecture

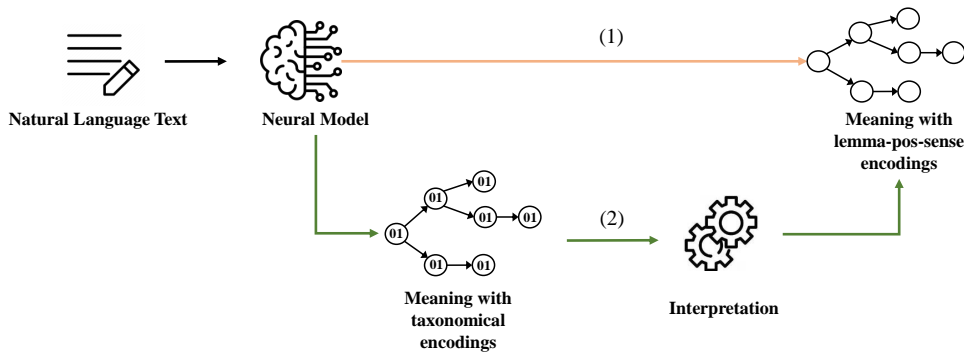
Modern semantic parsing predominantly utilizes sequence-to-sequence models trained with linearized meaning representations (Barzdins and Gosko 2016; van Noord and Bos 2017; Bevilacqua, Blloshmi, and Navigli 2021). In our approach, we retain the sequence-to-sequence architecture but adapt the output to represent a linearized graph of semantic representation encoded with taxonomical encodings using the technique proposed by Bos (2023) as presented in Section 3.6. This output representation needs to undergo a process of interpretation (Figure 5). This interpretation is implemented by mapping the taxonomical encodings into concepts and relations of our human-readable dictionary. This dictionary consists of WordNet and the ontology of other symbols including the semantic roles. In other words, what the mapper does is translating each encoding into a traditional format found in the standard meaning representations.

Let  $\mathcal{D}$  be a dictionary that maps taxonomical encodings to unambiguous predicate symbols, much like as shown in Tables 1–4. Let  $T_n$  denote a taxonomical sequence meaning representation of length  $n$ , where  $T_n = (t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n)$ . Then, the interpretation of taxonomical encodings is defined as a mapping function  $\mathcal{M}$  as follows:

$$\mathcal{M}(T_n) = (M(t_1), M(t_2), \dots, M(t_m), \dots, M(t_n)) \quad (2)$$

$$M(t_m) = \begin{cases} \mathcal{D}(t_m), & \text{if } t_m \in \text{tax-format and } t_m \in \mathcal{D} \\ \mathcal{D}(C(t_m)), & \text{if } t_m \in \text{tax-format and } t_m \notin \mathcal{D} \\ t_m, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

The function  $\mathcal{M}$  in Equation (2) denotes the symbolic interpretation process, encapsulating the overall mapping of a meaning representation in taxonomical encodings. The function  $M$  in Equation (3) operates on individual elements of this meaning



**Figure 5**

The pipelines for semantic parsing in comparison. Route (1) shows a neural semantic parsing system based on traditional concept representations. Route (2) illustrates the taxonomy-based parsing system where a mapper interprets the produced symbols.

representation. It distinguishes three cases: (a) If an element  $t_m$  strictly follows the tax code format and is listed in the dictionary, it is directly mapped to the corresponding lemma-pos-sense, role, operator, or discourse relation format—for instance, n1222212113423100000000 is part of  $\mathcal{D}$ , and mapped to hobby.n.03; (b) If an element is not part of the dictionary but a valid taxonomical encoding, it undergoes computation by  $C$ , a traversal function that sifts through all tax codes in  $\mathcal{D}$  to identify the encoding closest to the input according to the Wu-Palmer similarity metric—for instance, n1233111111110000000000 is not part of  $\mathcal{D}$ , but approximated by  $C$  to n1233111111110000000000 which is part of  $\mathcal{D}$ , and then mapped to a WordNet synset, for example, wheat.beer.n.01;<sup>6</sup> (c) Elements that are not encoded are regarded as literals and left unchanged—for instance, *John* is kept as it is.

Hence, in our parsing system, taxonomical encodings serve as an intermediate representation, not as the final output. The interpretation component in the pipeline (Figure 5) generates a meaning graph that is readable for humans, encoded with lemma-pos-sense information and the usual labels for roles, operators, and discourse relations format (Table 1). The advantages of taxonomical encodings will be revealed in the following experiment sections.

## 6. Experiments and Results

We will compare three different representation methods for conceptual predicates: the standard one based on lemma, part of speech, and sense number (LPS, henceforth), one based on rather arbitrary WordNet identifiers (WID), and one based on our novel taxonomical encodings (TAX). The data that we use to run our experiments is drawn from the PMB. For evaluation we use both the standard test set to assess the overall semantic parsing accuracy (for English and German) as well as the challenge set dedicated to measure the ability to interpret concepts not part of the training data (for English only). Furthermore, we probe the models by extracting the sense embeddings to get an idea of whether they reflect the taxonomical information encoded in WordNet.

<sup>6</sup> For WordNet-Identifier encodings, which are represented by numbers, we determine the closest synset just by computing the numerical difference between two identifiers.



**Table 5**

Data statistics for two languages in the PMB 5.1.0. Words and Chars represents the average number of words and characters in one sample.

	Train			Development			Test		
	Samples	Words	Chars	Samples	Words	Chars	Samples	Words	Chars
English	9,560	5.7	29.5	1,195	5.4	29.6	1,195	5.3	29.6
German	1,256	5.1	29.9	936	4.9	29.7	936	4.8	29.7

## 6.1 Data

For our experiments, we selected the gold-standard English and German data from the PMB<sup>7</sup> as detailed in Table 5. English data is divided into training, development, and test sets following an 8:1:1 split ratio, and German data follows a 4:3:3 split ratio to make the development and test sufficiently large for evaluation purposes.

## 6.2 Experimental Settings

In our experiments, we utilized the most frequently used seq2seq architecture, specifically leveraging the transformer-based T5 (Raffel et al. 2019) and BART (Lewis et al. 2020), two pre-trained transformer-based architectures. Specifically, we fine-tuned their multilingual variants (because we include both English and German): mT5 (Xue et al. 2021), byT5 (Xue et al. 2022), and mBART (Liu et al. 2020). mT5 builds upon the T5 model with pre-training on multi-languages corpus. byT5 enhances the multilingual approach through byte-level processing, making it especially effective at handling languages with limited data resources. Meanwhile, mBART also leverages a multilingual corpus for its pre-training phase and adopts a denoising autoencoder strategy. A noteworthy distinction between these models lies in their tokenization approaches: mT5 and mBART utilize sub-word tokenization, while byT5 uses byte-level tokenization. In our task, whether employing the lemma-pos-sense notation, WordNet identifiers, or taxonomical encodings, each notation presents a format distinct from the natural languages that were seen in their pre-training corpora. This divergence challenges the tokenization strategies of the models and their proficiency in processing new language with limited data.

We set the learning rate to  $10^{-4}$ , included a decay rate of 0.5, and set a patience threshold of 5 for early stopping. More details are provided in Appendix D. Given the relatively small size of the German dataset for fine-tuning (1,256 instances for training), we initially fine-tune the models on the English data before fine-tuning them with the German data. Each experiment is ran three times to calculate the average and standard deviation, which are detailed in the results tables.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> We use the PMB 5.1.0 available at <https://pmb.let.rug.nl/releases>. We only use gold data for English and German for our experiments. Although the PMB also offers annotated data for other languages, it is of insufficient quantity for effective training. The PMB also provides silver data (partially annotated and verified by experts), but because word senses are not consistently corrected in this part of the data we will not explore it, although in general adding silver data to the training set has been proved to enhance parsing performance (van Noord, Toral, and Bos 2020; Poelman, van Noord, and Bos 2022; Wang et al. 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Code is available at <https://github.com/LastDance500/neural-symbolic-parsing>.

**Table 6**

Semantic parsing results (Hard Smatch, Soft Smatch, Ill-Formed Rate) for **English** using three different models: lemma-pos-sense, WordNet-IDs, and Taxonomical encodings.

	LPS			WID			TAX		
	HSm	SSm	IFR	HSm	SSm	IFR	HSm	SSm	IFR
mT5	84.2 ± 2.6	86.4 ± 2.1	6.4 ± 0.8	81.1 ± 2.5	86.0 ± 2.3	4.9 ± 0.9	80.1 ± 3.2	86.2 ± 1.8	3.6 ± 0.9
byT5	<b>87.4</b> ± 1.8	89.4 ± 2.3	4.7 ± 0.4	86.3 ± 1.1	91.2 ± 1.0	1.8 ± 0.5	86.6 ± 2.3	<b>91.8</b> ± 2.5	2.3 ± 0.6
mBART	79.5 ± 1.2	82.8 ± 2.2	3.9 ± 0.7	76.4 ± 0.9	81.5 ± 0.5	3.8 ± 0.6	83.0 ± 2.6	86.2 ± 1.6	3.4 ± 0.4

**Table 7**

Semantic parsing results (Hard Smatch, Soft Smatch, Ill-formed Rate) for **German** using three different models: lemma-pos-sense, WordNet-IDs, and taxonomical encodings.

	LPS			WID			TAX		
	HSm	SSm	IFR	HSm	SSm	IFR	HSm	SSm	IFR
mT5	78.6 ± 2.2	81.7 ± 2.4	8.2 ± 1.7	78.5 ± 2.3	83.5 ± 2.1	5.5 ± 1.3	77.3 ± 2.4	84.5 ± 2.5	2.8 ± 1.5
byT5	<b>80.5</b> ± 1.1	82.3 ± 1.2	4.5 ± 0.6	79.3 ± 1.0	86.4 ± 1.3	5.8 ± 0.8	80.1 ± 1.2	<b>88.6</b> ± 1.3	2.2 ± 0.4
mBART	78.3 ± 2.3	83.2 ± 2.5	1.6 ± 0.6	72.5 ± 2.4	79.2 ± 2.3	4.1 ± 0.7	76.3 ± 2.1	84.8 ± 1.1	<b>1.7</b> ± 0.7

### 6.3 Results on Semantic Parsing

The results for semantic parsing for each of the three different meaning representations are presented in Table 6 (English) and Table 7 (German). We show the standard (hard) Smatch score (HSm) for exact semantic matching and the soft Smatch score (SSm) for approximate semantic matching. We also include the rate of ill-formed output (IFR), as the seq2seq architectures that we employ do not guarantee well-formed graph meaning representations (any output that is ill-formed is assigned a score of 0).

The standard Smatch scores are a little bit below earlier reported F-scores on PMB data (a Hard Smatch score 94.7 for English and 92.0 for German, as reported by Wang et al. 2023), but they can be considered decent given that we only train on the gold data part and we don't use further pre-training on silver and bronze data from the PMB corpus. Additionally, our research objective is not to reach the highest performance, but rather compare performance of differently structured predicate symbols in meaning representations. The results for German (Table 7) are lower than those for English. We think this is caused by two factors: There is, compared to English, less typographical correspondence between the input words and output meanings, and there is less training data available for German. Nonetheless, the results for German are in line with those for English.

It is interesting to compare the performance of the three different architectures: mT5, byT5, and mBART. Despite the fact that all models are based on the seq2seq and encoder-decoder framework, they exhibit non-consistent performance on these three representations. This is due to the difference in their pre-training objectives and corpora, activation functions, parameter initialization, and other aspects (we kindly refer the reader to the original papers of these models; see Section 6.2). For instance, for both English and German, mT5, when trained using the WID representation, shows superior Hard Smatch score compared with TAX; in contrast, byT5 and mBART obtain higher Hard Smatch scores using TAX than using WID (Tables 6 and 7).

The byT5 model achieved the highest Smatch scores among all settings and both languages. We believe that the tokenization strategy of byT5 is the main reason for its good performance. This is in line with the findings of van Noord, Toral, and Bos

(2020), who suggest that DRS parsing benefits from the character-level tokenization. Giving a concrete example, mT5’s sub-word tokenizer segments *hobby.n.03*, *101612476*, and *n1222212113423100000000* into disjointed chunks like *[hobby, ., n, .03]*, *[10, 1612, 476]*, and *[n, 1222, 2121, 1342, 31, 00000000]*, respectively. In contrast, byT5’s byte-level tokenizer processes the same inputs into *[h, o, b, b, y, ., n, ., 0, 3]*, *[1, 0, 1, 6, 1, 2, 4, 7, 6]*, and *[n, 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 4, 2, 3, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0]*, offering a more meaningful and robust segmentation. This distinction is particularly crucial for taxonomical encodings, where each character represents a specific layer within the taxonomy.

In the rest of this discussion we will focus on byT5 given its superior performance. Based on the Hard Smatch scores, LPS emerged as the top performer, achieving scores of 87.4 for English and 80.5 for German. WID and TAX perform similarly: Both are slightly lower than LPS. We think the main reason why LPS outperforms TAX and WID with Hard Smatch is that LPS benefits from (a) generating a lemma by copying character sequences from the text input to the meaning output, and (b) generating the most frequent sense number “01” (see Section 5.2) and thereby producing the correct predicate symbol. Evidences for (a) can be found in Appendix E, where we feed misspelled words to the models revealing copying behavior for LPS. Evidences for (b) can be found in Appendix F where the majority of sense numbers chosen is “01” for LPS. The predicate symbols for TAX and WID are not based on lemmas and sense numbers (see Table 1), so they cannot “benefit” from copying lemmas or producing the most frequent sense.

However, the situation changes when we turn to the results of approximate semantic matching, where the TAX-parser demonstrates better performance (91.8 for English and 88.6 for German). The Soft Smatch score of TAX-parsers improved by a minimum of 3.2 points over Hard Smatch, reaching a peak increase of 6.2 for English and 8.5 for German. Conversely, while the Soft Smatch scores for both LPS and WID saw a modest rise, both the magnitude of their increases and final Soft Smatch scores fell short when compared to the TAX-parser. In this case, the larger increase demonstrates that TAX is doing something interesting that LPS and WID are not capable of. In Section 6.4 and 6.5, we will perform a deeper analysis of this behavior.

Considering the IFR, we can observe that there are two main causes for ill-formed outputs. One is that the index points to a non-existent concept, and the other is that the generated graph is cyclic. We found that both the WID-parser and TAX-parser significantly reduced the frequency of index-related prediction errors, which thus reduced the IFR for both English and German. These errors typically stem from the model’s limited understanding of the generated graph structure. The low IFR can be seen as evidence that proposed uniform representation using encodings enhances the seq2seq model’s comprehension of semantic graph structures.

#### 6.4 Results on Unknown Concept Identification

Although the overall results for semantic parsing already favor our newly proposed taxonomical encodings (TAX), we also want to show that TAX is making fewer absurd predictions than its alternatives, LPS and WID. In Section 5.2 we presented a challenge test set for semantic parsing that contains out-of-distribution concepts. There are two ways to look at the results of the three different approaches on this stress test: globally, using Smatch scores; or locally, looking in detail on how the three approaches react on unknown concepts. The global results in terms of Hard Smatch and Soft Smatch metrics remain in line with the results of the standard tests of the previous section: For ByT5, the LPS-parser scores the highest Hard Smatch (73.3) while the TAX-parser scores the highest Soft Smatch (78.1).

**Table 8**

Results on unknown concept identification for nouns, verbs, and adjectives, comparing meaning representations based on the standard lemma-pos-sense notation (LPS), WordNet identifiers (WID), with taxonomical encodings (TAX).

Category	Number	LPS	WID	TAX
noun	430	0.275	0.391	<b>0.421</b>
verb	128	0.270	0.289	<b>0.313</b>
adjective & adverb	65	<b>0.447</b>	0.410	0.432

For a more fine-grained analysis we looked at how the three approaches dealt with the unknown concepts. For each example sentence in the challenge test set we identified the unknown concepts and paired them with the prediction of the corresponding concepts in the output meaning representation. This was done via an automatic alignment of concepts followed by human verification and correction when needed. Then we applied the Wu-Palmer similarity to each concept pair (gold vs. predicted). The results of identifying these unknown concepts are presented in Table 8.

As Table 8 shows, none of the three approaches performs very well. Recall that achieving a perfect score on this task is highly unlikely—only by chance a parser might pick the correct word sense. Hence, all three parsers are expected to make mistakes, but there are important differences in the severity of these mistakes (Table 9).

The TAX encodings show the best performance for unknown noun and verb concepts. The standard notation following the LPS convention yields mediocre results because the parser will in most cases default to the most frequent (first or second) sense following the sense distribution in the training data. The WID parser performs surprisingly well, so the identifiers exhibit some systematic grouping that we are not aware of. Unknown verb concepts seem harder to predict, perhaps because they show less hierarchical structure in WordNet than nouns.

The LPS-parser makes the best predictions for adjectives and adverbs. This can probably be attributed to three factors. First, compared with nouns and verbs, there is no hierarchical structure in WordNet for adjectives and adverbs (see Section 4.3). Second, the Wu-Palmer measure that we use for similarity is not optimal for adjectives and adverbs, as it doesn't take polarity into account in a principled way.<sup>9</sup> Third, the training set includes only a modest number of adjectives (2,845) and adverbs (665), limiting the model to effectively learn the taxonomical information inside the encodings. In contrast, with adequate data for nouns (35,836) and verbs (8,620), the model significantly benefits from taxonomical information.

Table 9 shows some challenge set examples of unknown concept predictions for the three different parsing models (the results of the entire challenge set are shown in Appendix G). As we have seen before, the LPS-parser is extremely good at transforming word forms to a lemma and a high frequency sense number, but this strategy does not fare well on the challenge set. In fact, it makes severe mistakes, predicting *thrush* (the infection) instead of *thrush* (the bird), or *Micky Mantle* (the baseball player) rather than *mantle* (the garment). However, there were several cases where the LPS-parser had a

<sup>9</sup> To give an idea of the complexity of defining similarity of adjectives, consider the comparison of long.a.01 (temporal), long.a.02 (spatial) with short.a.01 (temporal). In a way, long.a.01 and long.a.02 are similar in polarity, but dissimilar in dimension. From a different perspective, long.a.01 and short.a.01 are similar in dimension, but dissimilar in polarity. It is hard to catch this into one single similarity score.

**Table 9**

Some instances of the challenge set with words with out-of-vocabulary concepts in boldface, and the concepts predicted by the lemma-pos-sense parser (LPS) and the taxonomical encoding parser (TAX). In brackets the Wu-Palmer similarity score between gold and prediction.

Input Text	Gold	LPS prediction	TAX prediction
Scientist examines the insect’s <b>antennae</b> .	n.03	antennae.n.01 (0.00)	muscle.n.01 (0.63)
... went birdwatching. She saw ... a <b>hobby</b> .	n.03	hobby.n.01 (0.09)	big_cat.n.01 (0.67)
They played <b>Scrabble</b> in the living room.	n.02	scrabble.n.01 (0.11)	chess.n.02 (0.90)
The <b>thrush</b> ’s song filled the forest with ...	n.03	thrush.n.01 (0.17)	pigeon.n.01 (0.79)
The soldier was shot in the <b>calf</b> .	n.02	calf.n.01 (0.20)	cheek.n.01 (0.58)
David was armed with a <b>slings</b> .	n.04	slings.n.01 (0.20)	gun.n.01 (0.90)
Jennifer cooked the bass in a <b>steamer</b> .	n.02	steamer.n.01 (0.20)	refrigerator.n.01 (0.43)
... mayor proposed extensive <b>cuts</b> in the ...	n.19	cut.n.01 (0.24)	trade.n.01 (0.52)
Tiger Woods <b>aced</b> the 16th hole.	v.03	ace.v.02 (0.25)	dig.v.02 (0.20)
... musician was playing a ... <b>fugue</b> ...	n.03	fugue.n.01 (0.25)	tune.n.01 (0.71)
He <b>shuffled</b> the cards.	v.02	shuffle.v.01 (0.25)	toss.v.03 (0.22)
The moon is <b>waxing</b> .	v.03	wax.v.01 (0.25)	wake_up.v.02 (0.76)
The elephant’s <b>trunk</b> is an extended nose.	n.05	trunk.n.02 (0.26)	ear.n.01 (0.73)
The <b>stripper</b> in the club did a strip for us.	n.03	stripper.n.01 (0.27)	sailor.n.01 (0.73)
She <b>dressed</b> the salad.	v.10	dress.v.01 (0.29)	repair.v.01 (0.25)
The woman wore a short black <b>mantle</b> .	n.08	mantle.n.02 (0.36)	coat.n.01 (0.86)
The athlete had a <b>muscular</b> build.	a.02	muscular.a.01 (0.50)	fat.a.01 (0.50)
The artist painted with <b>vivid</b> colors.	a.03	vivid.a.01 (0.50)	infinite.a.01 (0.59)
A tiny <b>wren</b> was hiding in the shrubs.	n.02	wren.n.01 (0.54)	oriole.n.01 (0.88)
<b>Hungarian</b> is a challenging language ...	n.02	hungarian.n.n.02 (1.00)	french.n.02 (0.54)
... was playing a ... fugue on the <b>grand</b> .	n.02	grand.n.02 (1.00)	restaurant.n.01 (0.52)

“lucky strike,” when it picked the second sense for a lemma which happened to be correct. A case in point is *Hungarian* (the language), where the LPS-parser picked the second sense, perhaps because most languages in WordNet happen to be assigned the second sense (the first sense is usually the inhabitant of a country).

Most interestingly, in analogy with recent approaches to image classification (Mukherjee, Garg, and Roy 2021; Bertinetto et al. 2020), the TAX-parser “makes the best mistakes”, as it often predicted concepts similar to the unknowns. Table 9 shows some intriguing examples. For instance, when given the sentence “Jennifer cooked the bass in a steamer”, it predicts *refrigerator* which is close in meaning to *steamer* (the cooking utensil sense) as they are both appliances. For the sentence “The soldier was shot in the calf”, it predicts *cheek* (human face) which is close in meaning to *calf* (part of a human leg) as they are both body parts. And for the sentence “The woman wore a short black mantle”, it predicts *coat* which is close in meaning to *mantle* (a sleeveless garment) as they are both pieces of clothing.

In other words, the TAX-parser makes mistakes, but less drastic ones than the mistakes made by the LPS-parser, because it will attempt to find a concept that is close in meaning (exploiting the contextual understanding of the pre-trained language model) rather than copying a lemma from the textual input to output meaning, as the LPS-parser seems to be doing.

### 6.5 Probing Structural Information in Neural Models

To check whether our models learn the hierarchical taxonomical information during the training process, we use a probing technique to investigate and understand the internal

representations and knowledge encoded within the model. Probing is a recent method to validate whether neural models possess certain (structural) properties (Ettinger, Elgohary, and Resnik 2016; Misra, Rayz, and Ettinger 2023; Petersen and Potts 2023).

In our case, we probe the embeddings of the unknown concepts, given their three corresponding sentences in the challenge set (see Section 5.2). Because we want to compare embeddings of different levels of specificity to reflect the model’s understanding of the WordNet structure, we place each unknown concept into a small hierarchy of four levels based on itself (the most specific level) and its first three hypernyms (increasing in generality on each level). To extend coverage, we add the WordNet co-hyponyms to each concept (except for the most general level).

For instance, for the concept *hobby.n.03* the first three hypernyms in WordNet are *falcon.n.01*, *hawk.n.01*, and *raptor.n.01*. Then we expand each of these concepts with their co-hyponyms from WordNet. For example, for *hobby.n.01* we obtain the co-hyponyms *gyrfalcon.n.01* and *kestrel.n.01* among others, and so on. All these concepts together form what we call a **concept group**. Each concept group consists of four levels of concepts and is paired with three different sentence templates based on the challenge set. Each sentence template contains exactly one blank in which the lemma corresponding to the concept is filled in (*hobby*, *kestrel*, *gyrfalcon*, *hawk*, *raptor*, etc.). For our running example, we have the sentence template “Powerful and fast-flying, the \_\_\_ hunts medium-sized birds.”, and filling in the blank with the corresponding lemma of the concept group results in a new sentence for each concept. The sentence templates are used for all four levels in the concept group. Table 10 shows two concept groups with sentence templates.

This way, for each level in the concept group we obtain around 25 sentences. We input these sentences to the model and extract the embeddings of the concepts in the last layer of the model’s encoder. We average the embeddings of all lemmas for each sentence template and do this for each level. This gives us four embeddings for each concept, ranging from specific (e.g., *hobby*, *gyrfalcon*, ...) to general (e.g., *raptor*).

To evaluate the reflection of the hierarchical information captured by the embeddings, we can compare the semantic distances of the embeddings representing the four levels of specificity. The assumption here is that the more generic a concept, the greater the semantic distance to a specific concept should be. We do this by computing the cosine distance for all combinations of specificity levels (with  $n$  levels, this gives us  $\binom{n}{2}$  distances). For the four levels that we have, we obtain six distance pairs, and a

**Table 10**

Two examples of concept groups for four levels of specificity. Each group is connected to three sentence templates. Templates are simplified and not all synset instances are shown due to space constraints.

Level	Concept	Sentence Templates
0	<i>drive.n.10</i> , <i>adapter.n.02</i> , <i>airfoil.n.01</i> , ...	The technician installed the new ____ in
1	<i>device.n.01</i> , <i>ceramic.n.01</i> , <i>connection.n.03</i> , ...	the machine.   She carefully examined the
2	<i>instrumentality.n.03</i> , <i>article.n.02</i> , <i>block.n.01</i> , ...	___ for any defects.   The engineer needed
3	<i>artifact.n.01</i>	the specific ____ to complete the project.
0	<i>almond.n.02</i> , <i>cherry.n.03</i> , <i>drupelet.n.01</i> , ...	The botanist carefully studied the ____
1	<i>drupe.n.01</i> , <i>achene.n.01</i> , <i>acorn.n.01</i> , ...	under the microscope.   The farmer har-
2	<i>fruit.n.01</i> , <i>agamete.n.01</i> , <i>antheridium.n.01</i> , ...	vested the ___ from the field.   She placed
3	<i>reproductive.structure.n.01</i>	the ___ into the basket during ...

**Table 11**

Hierarchy Reflection Scores for the concept embeddings of three fine-tuned byT5 parsers and the sense embeddings of SensEmBERT.

Parser	Embedding	HRS-base	HRS-all
	SensEmBERT	0.876	0.858
LPS	byT5	0.771	0.723
WID	byT5	0.796	0.753
TAX	byT5	0.810	0.784

total of 15 comparisons to make. Each comparison is evaluated as “satisfied” (following the WordNet hierarchy) or not. For instance, the distance of a specific concept (e.g., hobby.n.03) to a slightly more generic concept (e.g., falcon.n.01) should be smaller than the distance of that concept to the most generic concept (e.g., bird.n.01).

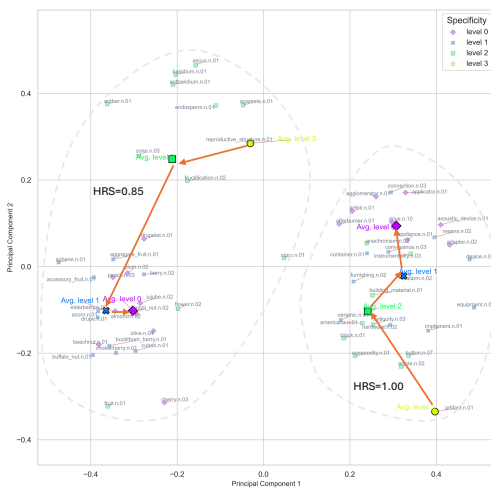
The final score is computed by the number of satisfied comparisons divided by the total number of comparisons (Table 11). We call this metric the Hierarchy Reflection Score (HRS), and the pseudo code for the metric is shown in Appendix G. The score (a number between 0 and 1) reflects the hierarchical structure in the model: The higher the score, the closer it follows WordNet’s ontology. We distinguish two variants of HRS: *base* and *all*. The base-HRS metric only compares the distances to the most specific concept, whereas all-HRS compares all levels.<sup>10</sup> In our experiment, we compare three different models (LPS-byT5, WID-byT5, and TAX-byT5) and pre-trained sense embeddings, SensEmBERT<sup>11</sup> by Scarlini, Pasini, and Navigli (2020a) for 130 concepts.

Among the models we trained for different semantic representations, the TAX-byT5 model achieved the highest score. The WID-byT5 model delivered a moderate performance, while the LPS-byT5 model had the lowest score. This aligns with the results we observed in the semantic parsing task and unknown concept identification task, where the TAX-byT5 model demonstrated superior structural understanding compared to the other two models. SensEmBERT demonstrates superior performance, but it is unsurprising given that it is specifically trained to adhere to the WordNet hierarchy, compared with the other three models we trained on semantic parsing.

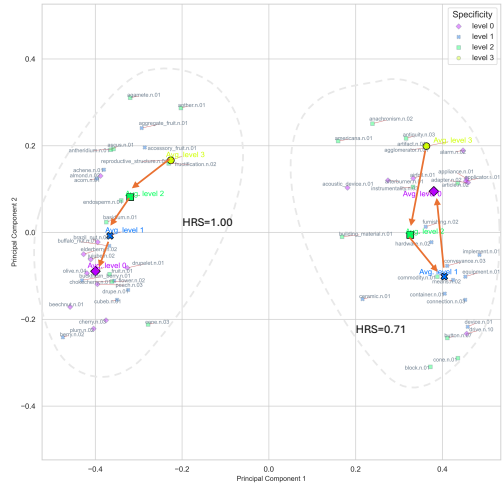
We can also visualize the results of the probing methods. We follow the method by Lai and Nissim (2022) and apply Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to reduce the dimensionality of embeddings. Figure 6 shows the visualizations for the two example sets listed in Table 10. We use three arrows to connect the averaged embeddings of the four different specificity levels. Intuitively, the more the arrows follow a straight line in the same direction, the better they reflect the WordNet hierarchy. For instance, the embeddings of the TAX-parser succeed to reflect the WordNet hierarchy for the conceptual group for driven.n.10, as the arrows in the right of Figure 6c form a relatively straight line. The embeddings of SensEmBERT do not entirely reflect the WordNet hierarchy for almond.n.02, as the connected arrows in the left of Figure 6a show a slight turn. The embeddings of the LPS-parser fail to reflect the WordNet hierarchy

<sup>10</sup> Assuming  $d(i, j)$  denotes the distance between embeddings on levels  $i$  and  $j$ , the comparisons for HRS-base are:  $d(0,1) < d(0,2)$ ,  $d(0,1) < d(0,3)$ ,  $d(0,2) < d(0,3)$  and the comparisons for HRS-all are:  $d(0,1) < d(0,2)$ ,  $d(0,1) < d(0,3)$ ,  $d(0,2) < d(0,3)$ ,  $d(1,2) < d(0,2)$ ,  $d(1,2) < d(1,3)$ ,  $d(1,3) < d(2,3)$ ,  $d(2,3) < d(0,3)$ .

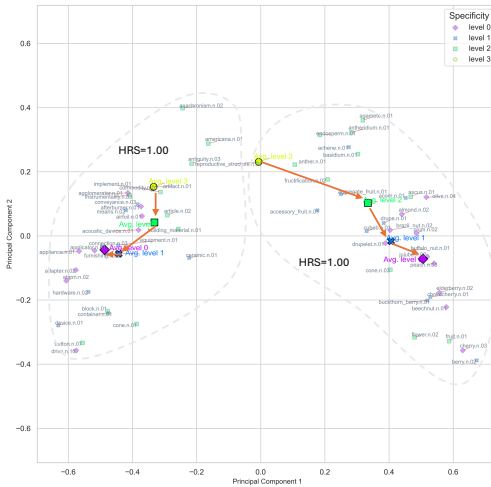
<sup>11</sup> For SensEmBERT, we directly retrieve the embeddings from an existing corpus in <https://nlp.uniroma1.it/sensembert/>.



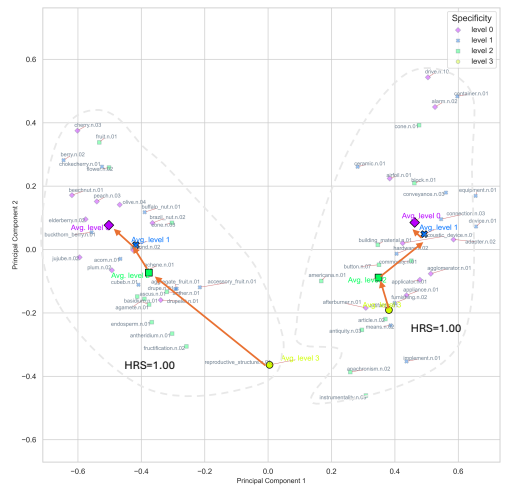
(a) PCA of SensEmBERT Embeddings



(b) PCA of LPS-byt5 Encoder Embeddings



(c) PCA of TAX-byt5 Encoder Embeddings



(d) PCA of WID-byt5 Encoder Embeddings

Figure 6

PCA analysis of the embeddings for two sets of concepts in Table 10. The orange lines sequentially connect the averaged embeddings of the four specificity levels. The level 0 represents the most specific concepts, and level 3 represents the most general concepts. We add the HRS-all scores for each group of concepts.

driven.n.10, which can be seen by the big turn of the arrows in Figure 6b. Although Figure 6 only shows the PCA of two instances, it does nicely illustrate the difference in interpretation of hierarchical structure of the models or the lack thereof.

### 7. Conclusion and Future Work

We showed that by taking an existing lexical ontology, WordNet, we are able to generate hierarchical compositional encodings for predicate symbols for nouns, verbs, adjectives,



and adverbs. We complemented these with encodings for semantic roles, relations, and logical operators. The resulting formal meaning representations contain concept representations that are normalized, abstracting away from specific languages. These extremely rich conceptual representations are still “parseable” for neural models. For English and German, parsing performance is a little bit lower than the standard lemma-pos-sense notation under Hard Smatch (exact semantic matching), which we attribute to the input-output copying capabilities (translation) of the neural models. However, the advantage of taxonomical encodings is evidenced by a higher Soft Smatch score (approximate semantic matching) and a superior identification of out-of-distribution concepts. Furthermore, the probing results indicate that the models trained with the taxonomical encodings exhibit superior structural understanding capabilities.

We believe that these results are encouraging and show a promising way to combine distributional semantics with formal semantics. We hope that the approach presented in this article is inspirational for future work on neural-symbolic semantic processing. We envision potential both on the symbolic and the neural side.

On the symbolic side, there is a lot of space to further explore the taxonomical encodings. The current encodings are complex, and perhaps there are ways to reduce the number of layers, or different ways of incorporating verbs and adjectives. Ontologies other than WordNet can be explored, as well as different representations of concepts (perhaps pictograms), and better methods for measuring similarity, in particular that of adjectives and adverbs (especially for the case of antonymy). Another direction for future work is exploring alternative evaluation metrics to better handle the complexity introduced by the fine-grained similarity evaluation in Soft Smatch. The Soft Smatch method in this article relies on the hill-climbing algorithm of Hard Smatch, which can sometimes result in unwanted matches (Opitz 2023).<sup>12</sup>

On the neural side, there are many potential areas worth exploring that have fallen outside the scope of this article. First, incorporating sense embeddings is promising, but integrating them into a neural semantic parser that produces complete meaning representations is challenging.<sup>13</sup> Another interesting area of research is to investigate modifications of the loss function aimed at enhancing the model’s understanding of taxonomical information in the encodings, where weights are assigned to characters based on their positions. Another direction to consider is using large language models such as Phi3, Mistral, LLaMa, and GPT-4 for semantic parsing, as they are known to have strong language modeling capabilities. However, their architectures (decoder-only) and corresponding experimental settings strongly differ from those of our models. Some pilot experiments that we ran indicate that their performance, whether using standard representations or taxonomical encodings, is by far inferior to our models. An investigation on why large language models perform so poorly on semantic parsing goes beyond the objectives of this article but is perhaps an exciting topic for future research.

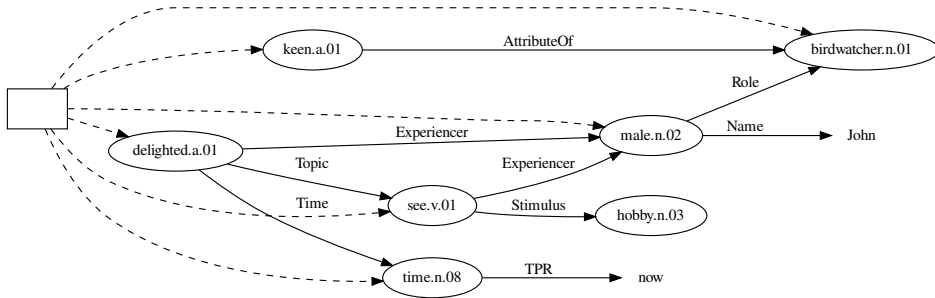
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12 For instance, if the model predicts (person.n.01, jump.n.01) for the concepts (cat.n.01, laugh.n.01), hill-climbing may match cat.n.01 with jump.n.01 and laugh.n.01 with person.n.01 because these matches score higher than cat.n.01 with person.n.01 and laugh.n.01 with jump.n.01, leading to some spurious scores.

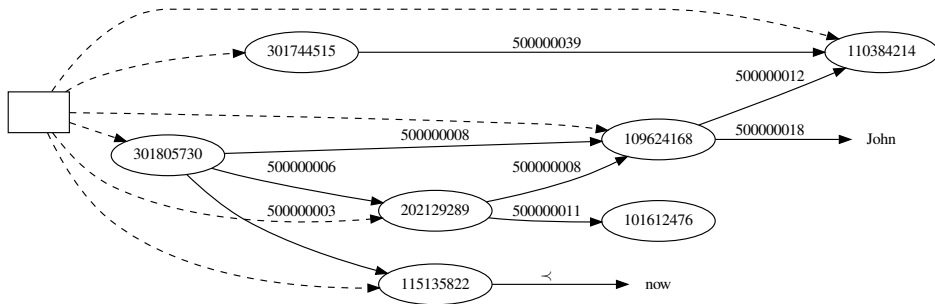
13 Adding pre-trained sense embeddings to the tokenizer could enhance its understanding of WordNet senses, but there are two main drawbacks: (1) compatibility issues due to independently trained embeddings with mismatched dimensions (e.g., 300 for AutoExtend and 2,048 for SensEmbBERT, vs. 768 for T5-base and 1,024 for T5-large); (2) a significant increase in the tokenizer’s dictionary size, given the PMB corpus has over 10,000 senses and WordNet contains more than 100,000 senses.

### Appendix A. Meaning Representations in LPS, WID, and TAX

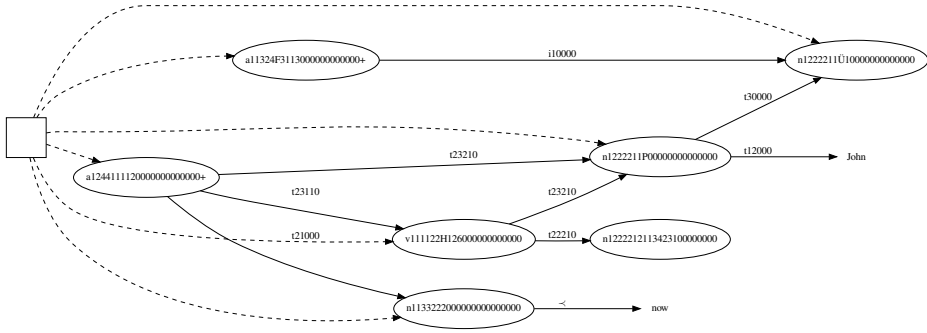
We show here the three different types of meaning representations used in our experiments. We do this for the text “John, a keen birdwatcher, was delighted to see a hobby.” in graph format for readability. In the experiments we use the sequence notation.



**Figure A.1**  
 Meaning graph using the lemma-pos-sense (LPS) notation to encode concepts.



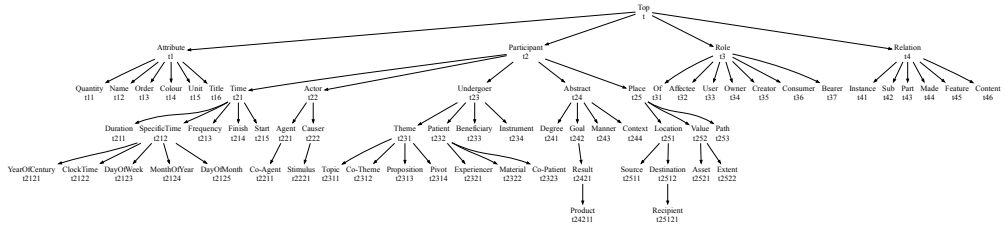
**Figure A.2**  
 Meaning graph based on unique identifiers (WID). The identifiers for synsets are taken from WordNet. The identifiers for roles are assigned by us.



**Figure A.3**  
 Meaning graph with taxonomical encodings for concepts and roles (TAX).

**Appendix B. Taxonomy of Roles Used in the Parallel Meaning Bank**

Figure B.1 shows the hierarchy of roles and relations as used in the Parallel Meaning Bank. This hierarchy is an extension of the one proposed for VerbNet (Bonial et al. 2011).



**Figure B.1**  
 Complete hierarchy of semantic roles used in the semantic parsing experiments. Each role name is shown with the taxonomical encoding.

## Appendix C. Taxonomy Encodings of Operators and Discourse Relations

The identifier and character encoding of operators and discourse relations in Table C.1 and Table C.2.

**Table C.1**

Taxonomy encodings of Operators. Differently from the previous table, the id mentioned here is not the WordNet identifier, but rather one that we have assigned manually.

Operator	Identifier	Char code	Meaning
TPR	700000001	←	temporal precedes (before)
TSU	700000002	→	temporal succeeds (after)
TIN	700000003	⊂	temporal inclusion
TCT	700000004	⊃	temporal contains
TAB	700000005	⊗	temporal abut
LES	700000006	<	less than
LEQ	700000007	≤	less or equal than
TOP	700000008	⊥	not more than
MOR	700000010	>	greater than
EQU	700000011	=	equal
ANA	700000012	≡	anaphoric link
APX	700000013	≈	approximately equal
NEQ	700000014	≠	not equal
SXP	700000015	≫	spatially behind
SXN	700000016	≪	spatially before
SZN	700000017	∨	spatially under
SZP	700000018	∧	spatially above

**Table C.2**

Taxonomy encodings of Discourse Relations.

Relation	Identifier	Char code
ALTERNATION	600000001	∨
ATTRIBUTE	600000002	@
CONDITION	600000003	→
CONSEQUENCE	600000004	⇒
CONTINUATION	600000005	↔
CONTRAST	600000006	/
EXPLANATION	600000007	∞
NECESSITY	600000008	□
NEGATION	600000009	¬
POSSIBILITY	600000010	◇
PRECONDITION	600000011	←
RESULT	600000012	∑
SOURCE	600000013	↔
CONJUNCTION	600000014	∧
ELABORATION	600000015	⊃
COMMENTARY	600000016	†

## Appendix D. Experimental Settings

To facilitate reproduction, we detail the important hyperparameters used. For the WID and TAX encodings, we adopt a larger patience and decay rate, allowing ample time for convergence. This decision stems from experimental observations indicating that these novel (to the models) representations exhibit a slower convergence rate compared to LPS. We test using hierarchical loss, which give higher weight to the characters on the left within each word, but the initial experiments didn't show any improvements.

**Table D.1**  
Hyperparameters for training different representations.

	Learning Rate	Epoch	Patience	Decay Rate	Optimizer	Loss Function
LPS	1e-4	50	10	0.1	AdamW	Cross Entropy
WID	1e-4	50	<b>10</b>	<b>0.5</b>	AdamW	Cross Entropy
TAX	1e-4	50	<b>10</b>	<b>0.5</b>	AdamW	Cross Entropy

## Appendix E. Interpreting Misspellings

In order to assess the ability of models to deal with misspellings we created a test suite of English sentences paired with meaning representations where each sentence contained a commonly misspelled content word, that is *acceptable*, *humourous*, *entrepreneur*. The results, shown in Table E.1, demonstrate that the traditional lemma-pos-sense notation fails to identify wrongly spelled content words caused by its tendency to copy character sequences from input words to output lemmas.

**Table E.1**  
Results on misspelled content words by computing concept identification scores for the three different models: lemma-pos-sense (LPS), WordNet identifiers (WID), and taxonomical encodings (TAX).

Category	Number	LPS	WID	TAX
noun	16	0.105	0.441	<b>0.563</b>
verb	10	0.149	<b>0.648</b>	0.593
adjective	16	0.000	0.415	<b>0.510</b>

## Appendix F. Concept Identification Results

This appendix shows predictions of the three semantic parsers (LPS, WID, TAX) on the challenge set for nouns (Table F.1), verbs (Table F.2), and modifiers (Table F.3). The challenge set includes several sentences for the out-of-vocabulary concepts. For reasons of space, only one prediction for each concept is shown. The complete predictions are available on our GitHub site.<sup>14</sup>

**Table F.1**

Instances of the challenge set with nouns with out-of-vocabulary concepts. In brackets the Wu-Palmer similarity score between gold and prediction.

Gold	LPS	WID	TAX
extract.n.02	extract.n.01 (0.24)	speech.n.01 (0.35)	history.n.02 (0.47)
cruiser.n.03	cruiser.n.01 (0.36)	dancer.n.01 (0.40)	ship.n.01 (0.85)
warbler.n.02	warbler.n.02 (1.00)	fictional_animal.n.01 (0.70)	tower.n.01 (0.45)
rag.n.03	rag.n.01 (0.14)	song.n.01 (0.75)	pot.n.01 (0.20)
harrier.n.03	harrier.n.01 (0.46)	tiger.n.02 (0.67)	shed.n.01 (0.42)
hobby.n.03	hobby.n.01 (0.11)	luggage.n.01 (0.40)	lobby.n.01 (0.40)
stool.n.02	stool.n.01 (0.59)	stadium.n.01 (0.35)	tooth.n.01 (0.30)
eagle.n.02	eagle.n.01 (0.19)	eagle.n.01 (0.19)	eagle.n.01 (0.19)
wallflower.n.03	wallflower.n.01 (0.52)	vegetarian.n.01 (0.70)	comedian.n.01 (0.73)
beetle.n.02	beelte.n.02 (0.00)	bed.n.01 (0.61)	shed.n.01 (0.55)
stake.n.05	stake.n.01 (0.13)	storage_space.n.01 (0.55)	hull.n.06 (0.57)
hungarian.n.02	hungarian.n.02 (1.00)	german.n.02 (0.57)	french.n.01 (0.54)
pen.n.02	pen.n.01 (0.60)	pen.n.01 (0.60)	pen.n.01 (0.60)
pen.n.05	pen.n.01 (0.42)	pen.n.01 (0.42)	pen.n.01 (0.42)
gondola.n.02	gondola.n.01 (0.57)	gun.n.01 (0.58)	bottle.n.01 (0.61)
bug.n.03	bug.n.02 (0.19)	coop.n.02 (0.52)	disease.n.01 (0.17)
investigation.n.02	investigation.n.01 (0.33)	practice.n.04 (0.78)	wrongdoing.n.02 (0.82)
thrush.n.03	thrush.n.01 (0.17)	lemur.n.01 (0.71)	pigeon.n.01 (0.79)
song.n.04	song.n.01 (0.53)	song.n.01 (0.53)	song.n.01 (0.53)
admiral.n.02	admiral.n.01 (0.48)	aunt.n.01 (0.54)	crocodilian_reptile.n.01 (0.57)
flower.n.02	flower.n.01 (0.45)	flower.n.01 (0.45)	flower.n.01 (0.45)
bloom.n.02	bloom.n.01 (0.33)	blood.n.01 (0.33)	blood.n.01 (0.33)
wren.n.02	wren.n.01 (0.57)	grass.n.01 (0.56)	oriole.n.01 (0.88)
bed.n.03	ocean_bed.n.01 (0.00)	picture.n.02 (0.47)	beach.n.01 (0.77)
impression.n.04	impression.n.01 (0.38)	tear.n.01 (0.38)	smell.n.01 (0.33)
tripper.n.04	tripper.n.01 (0.40)	tv_set.n.01 (0.61)	elevator.n.01 (0.76)
reel.n.05	reel.n.02 (0.12)	ranch.n.01 (0.17)	bike.n.02 (0.16)
course.n.07	course.n.01 (0.12)	candy.n.01 (0.78)	cup.n.02 (0.27)
mantle.n.08	mantle.n.02 (0.00)	(0.00)	coat.n.01 (0.86)
joint.n.06	joint.n.01 (0.32)	jet.n.01 (0.23)	joint.n.01 (0.32)
net.n.05	net.n.02 (0.70)	napkin.n.01 (0.55)	net.n.02 (0.70)
rally.n.05	rally.n.02 (0.47)	initiation.n.01 (0.59)	race.n.02 (0.62)
adder.n.03	adder.n.01 (0.38)	back_door.n.03 (0.37)	astronaut.n.01 (0.56)
key.n.04	key.n.03 (0.13)	key.n.01 (0.22)	key.n.01 (0.22)
harrier.n.02	hard_coat.n.01 (0.00)	dog.n.01 (0.91)	joiner.n.01 (0.47)
drive.n.10	drive.n.01 (0.12)	dress.n.01 (0.63)	engine.n.01 (0.80)
fugue.n.03	fugue.n.01 (0.29)	music.n.01 (0.57)	tune.n.01 (0.71)
grand.n.02	grand.n.02 (1.00)	guitar.n.01 (0.78)	restaurant.n.01 (0.52)
application.n.04	application.n.01 (0.30)	comic_book.n.01 (0.17)	application_form.n.01 (0.50)
bag.n.03	bag.n.01 (0.70)	bag.n.01 (0.70)	bag.n.01 (0.70)
cover.n.09	cover.n.01 (0.62)	schoolroom.n.01 (0.57)	mask.n.04 (0.60)
pain.n.04	pain.n.01 (0.20)	pain.n.01 (0.20)	pain.n.01 (0.20)
stripper.n.03	stripper.n.01 (0.29)	wizard.n.02 (0.76)	sailor.n.01 (0.73)
strip.n.06	strip.n.02 (0.21)	trip.n.01 (0.50)	trip.n.01 (0.50)
substance.n.04	substance.n.01 (0.67)	object.n.04 (0.36)	drug.n.01 (0.60)
ray.n.07	ray.n.01 (0.21)	hedgehog.n.02 (0.69)	sand.n.01 (0.25)
increase.n.05	increase.n.01 (0.15)	eye_blink.n.01 (0.21)	rate.n.02 (0.30)
cut.n.19	cut.n.01 (0.27)	art.n.02 (0.60)	trade.n.01 (0.52)
antenna.n.03	antennae.n.01 (0.00)	alarm.n.04 (0.20)	muscle.n.01 (0.63)
entrance.n.03	entrance.n.02 (0.29)	laugh.n.01 (0.38)	landing.n.04 (0.89)

<sup>14</sup> <https://github.com/LastDance500/neural-symbolic-parsing>.

Gold	LPS	WID	TAX
operation.n.05	operation.n.01 (0.31)	war.n.01 (0.71)	job.n.02 (0.78)
service.n.15	service.n.01 (0.74)	sewing_machine.n.01 (0.18)	service.n.01 (0.74)
whisker.n.02	whisker.n.01 (0.10)	cat.n.01 (0.25)	mouse.n.01 (0.26)
attack.n.07	attack.n.03 (0.21)	cold.n.01 (0.27)	attack.n.07 (1.00)
appearance.n.04	appearance.n.01 (0.43)	negotiation.n.01 (0.38)	athletic_game.n.01 (0.44)
sub.n.02	sub.n.01 (0.29)	stuff.n.02 (0.40)	dagger.n.01 (0.52)
dock.n.03	dock.n.01 (0.44)	dog.n.01 (0.40)	dog.n.01 (0.40)
touch.n.10	touch.n.01 (0.47)	view.n.02 (0.53)	improvement.n.01 (0.44)
weight.n.07	weight.n.01 (0.43)	kilo.n.01 (0.75)	value.n.02 (0.43)
pan.n.03	scale_pan.n.01 (0.00)	sweater.n.01 (0.63)	tumbler.n.02 (0.84)
labor.n.02	labor.n.02 (1.00)	behavior.n.01 (0.82)	job.n.01 (0.82)
unit.n.03	offensive_unit.n.01 (0.00)	college.n.02 (0.75)	school.n.01 (0.75)
period.n.07	period.n.01 (0.33)	time.n.08 (0.33)	time.n.03 (0.35)
top.n.10	top.n.01 (0.47)	toe.n.01 (0.30)	roof.n.01 (0.74)
top.n.09	top.n.02 (0.42)	top.n.02 (0.42)	frontier.n.02 (0.47)
carton.n.02	carton.n.01 (0.13)	calculator.n.02 (0.70)	ax.n.01 (0.61)
trunk.n.05	trunk.n.02 (0.26)	hat.n.01 (0.27)	ear.n.01 (0.73)
organ.n.03	organ_onstage.n.01 (0.00)	company.n.01 (0.21)	piano.n.01 (0.82)
cape.n.02	cape.n.02 (1.00)	calculator.n.02 (0.55)	wash.n.07 (0.82)
song.n.05	song.n.01 (0.33)	college.n.02 (0.32)	(0.27)
heat.n.06	heat.n.02 (0.38)	hour.n.01 (0.40)	heat.n.02 (0.38)
mouth.n.04	mouth.n.01 (0.35)	middle.n.01 (0.57)	frontier.n.02 (0.53)
calf.n.02	calf.n.01 (0.42)	calculator.n.02 (0.29)	cheek.n.01 (0.58)
chemistry.n.03	chemistry.n.01 (0.35)	chemistry.n.01 (0.35)	natural_science.n.01 (0.38)
crown.n.07	crown.n.01 (0.14)	bus_stop.n.01 (0.59)	haunt.n.01 (0.62)
mole.n.03	mole.n.02 (0.22)	bread.n.01 (0.40)	cup.n.01 (0.26)
almond.n.02	almond.n.02 (1.00)	sugar.n.01 (0.24)	entity.n.01 (0.25)
bass.n.04	bass.n.02 (0.12)	pretzel.n.01 (0.63)	sandglass.n.01 (0.29)
steamer.n.02	steamer.n.01 (0.24)	spoon.n.01 (0.52)	refrigerator (0.43)
lock.n.02	lock.n.01 (0.48)	shit.n.01 (0.30)	screw.n.04 (0.48)
ace.n.06	ace.n.08 (0.00)	extraterrestrial.n.01 (0.32)	(0.00)
slide.n.03	slide.n.03 (1.00)	soccer_ball.n.01 (0.20)	sunglasses.n.01 (0.19)
slip.n.11	slip.n.01 (0.11)	sock.n.01 (0.73)	wash.n.07 (0.86)
scrabble.n.02	scrabble.n.01 (0.11)	rugby.n.01 (0.56)	chess.n.01 (0.90)
decoy.n.02	decoy.n.01 (0.52)	fly.n.01 (0.45)	mosquito.n.01 (0.45)
jay.n.02	jay.n.01 (0.50)	hedgehog.n.02 (0.69)	dolphin.n.02 (0.62)
hole.n.03	hole.n.02 (0.29)	hole.n.02 (0.29)	shore.n.01 (0.33)
hawker.n.02	hawker.n.01 (0.55)	hunter.n.01 (0.96)	guest.n.01 (0.70)
merlin.n.02	merlin.n.01 (0.11)	match.n.01 (0.40)	bat.n.01 (0.71)
rocket.n.03	rocket.n.01 (0.48)	rayon.n.01 (0.53)	spoon.n.01 (0.45)
move.n.05	move.n.01 (0.63)	movie.n.01 (0.59)	assignment.n.05 (0.74)
barrel.n.02	barrel.n.02 (1.00)	basket.n.01 (0.84)	balcony.n.02 (0.67)
function.n.07	function.n.01 (0.38)	baseball_club.n.01 (0.30)	job.n.02 (0.30)
string.n.05	string.n.01 (0.22)	page.n.01 (0.21)	lock.n.01 (0.20)
green.n.06	green.n.02 (0.53)	tomb.n.01 (0.56)	grey.n.05 (0.21)
surge.n.03	surge.n.01 (0.15)	person.n.01 (0.24)	person.n.01 (0.24)
wave.n.06	wave.n.01 (0.21)	quantity.n.01 (0.27)	marker.n.02 (0.22)
sling.n.04	sling.n.02 (0.59)	soccer_ball.n.01 (0.64)	gun.n.01 (0.90)
sling.n.05	sling.n.01 (0.20)	sock.n.01 (0.64)	canopy.n.03 (0.67)
china.n.02	china.n.02 (1.00)	continent.n.01 (0.42)	orange_juice.n.01 (0.29)
slug.n.07	slug.n.01 (0.32)	goose.n.01 (0.59)	mosquito.n.01 (0.72)
growth.n.04	growth.n.01 (0.29)	fruit.n.01 (0.24)	flower.n.01 (0.21)
bullfinch.n.02	bullfinch.n.01 (0.57)	metatherian.n.01 (0.74)	chicken.n.02 (0.76)

**Table F.2**

Instances of the challenge set with verbs with out-of-vocabulary concepts.

Gold	LPS	WID	TAX
drive.v.08	drive.v.01 (0.40)	drive.v.01 (0.40)	drive.v.01 (0.40)
house.v.02	house.v.01 (0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
run.v.22	run.v.01 (0.15)	run.v.01 (0.15)	run.v.01 (0.15)
release.v.05	release.v.02 (0.27)	step_out.v.01 (0.20)	throw.v.03 (0.19)
serve.v.15	serve.v.07 (0.25)	serve.v.06 (0.50)	give.v.24 (0.50)
run.v.19	run.v.07 (0.24)	work.v.04 (0.24)	pass.v.14 (0.18)
recognize.v.08	recognize.v.01 (0.29)	remind.v.01 (0.17)	draw_up.v.04 (0.14)
describe.v.02	describe.v.01 (0.17)	kvetch.v.01 (0.29)	mislead.v.02 (0.91)
give.v.19	give.v.03 (0.50)	give.v.03 (0.50)	give.v.01 (0.13)
balloon.v.02	balloon.v.02 (1.00)	(0.00)	bathe.v.01 (0.21)
dress.v.10	dress.v.01 (0.29)	overcook.v.01 (0.26)	repair.v.01 (0.25)
ace.v.03	ace.v.02 (0.29)	improve.v.01 (0.18)	dig.v.01 (0.20)
poach.v.02	poach.v.01 (0.18)	catch.v.04 (0.18)	pour.v.01 (0.18)
hawk.v.02	hawk.v.01 (0.44)	sign.v.05 (0.29)	meow.v.01 (0.19)
shuffle.v.02	shuffle.v.01 (0.20)	braid.v.03 (0.17)	toss.v.03 (0.22)
bust.v.02	bust.v.01 (0.33)	push.v.01 (0.46)	block.v.01 (0.44)
check.v.19	check.v.01 (0.19)	recognize.v.04 (0.30)	draw_up.v.04 (0.30)
plug.v.04	plug.v.05 (0.25)	bewitch.v.01 (0.33)	search.v.01 (0.35)
ring.v.06	ring.v.01 (0.13)	wave.v.01 (0.18)	write.v.07 (0.42)
bark.v.03	bark.v.04 (0.17)	(0.00)	decapitate.v.01 (0.59)
refresh.v.02	refresh.v.01 (0.40)	leak.v.04 (0.26)	relax.v.01 (0.18)
take.v.27	take.v.09 (0.45)	take.v.09 (0.45)	run.v.01 (0.78)
draw.v.07	draw.v.06 (0.48)	draw.v.06 (0.48)	draw.v.13 (0.92)
order.v.05	order.v.02 (0.71)	order.v.02 (0.71)	dial.v.02 (0.56)
cram.v.03	cram.v.02 (0.15)	demolish.v.03 (0.62)	call.v.05 (0.12)
cram.v.02	cram.v.01 (0.20)	tear.v.01 (0.83)	slice.v.03 (0.80)
challenge.v.02	challenge.v.01 (0.15)	pick_up.v.02 (0.36)	elect.v.01 (0.47)
moderate.v.03	moderate.v.03 (1.00)	clear.v.24 (0.46)	grow.v.02 (0.17)
book.v.03	book.v.02 (0.14)	marry.v.01 (0.55)	allow.v.04 (0.14)
solicit.v.03	solicit.v.02 (0.25)	spy.v.02 (0.40)	sentence.v.01 (0.46)
hobble.v.03	hobble.v.01 (0.25)	brush.v.01 (0.11)	trap.v.04 (0.16)
wax.v.03	wax.v.01 (0.40)	shine.v.02 (0.19)	wake_up.v.02 (0.76)
breach.v.02	breach.v.01 (0.22)	leave.v.05 (0.18)	execute.v.03 (0.67)
swan.v.03	swan.v.01 (0.25)	send.v.01 (0.70)	swim.v.01 (0.45)



**Table F.3**  
Instances of the challenge set with modifiers with out-of-vocabulary concepts.

Gold	LPS	WID	TAX
calm.a.02	calm.a.01 (0.16)	(0.00)	(0.00)
rare.a.03	rare.a.01 (0.42)	capable.a.05 (0.42)	large.a.01 (0.67)
firmly.r.02	firmly.r.02 (1.00)	all_of_a_sudden.r.01 (0.33)	comfortably.r.02 (0.47)
sturdy.a.03	sturdy.a.02 (0.50)	dirty.a.01 (0.47)	dirty.a.01 (0.47)
short.a.02	short.a.02 (1.00)	short.a.02 (1.00)	short.a.02 (1.00)
muscular.a.02	muscular.a.01 (0.00)	(0.00)	fat.a.01 (0.50)
hard.a.03	(0.00)	(0.00)	jacket.n.01 (0.00)
grand.a.08	grand.a.01 (0.50)	huge.a.01 (0.17)	huge.a.01 (0.17)
extended.a.03	extended.a.01 (0.50)	long.a.02 (0.93)	long.a.01 (0.38)
gently.r.02	gently.r.01 (0.32)	in_public.r.01 (0.47)	(0.50)
dry.a.02	dry.a.01 (0.38)	surprised.a.01 (0.33)	weak.a.01 (0.40)
broken.a.07	broken.a.03 (0.50)	international.a.01 (0.44)	right.a.02 (0.53)
special.a.04	special.a.01 (0.00)	(0.00)	bad.a.01 (0.18)
vicious.a.02	vicious.a.02 (1.00)	fishy.a.02 (0.43)	suspicious.a.01 (0.47)
rugged.a.03	rugged.a.01 (0.59)	dirty.a.01 (0.42)	upper.a.01 (0.16)
rather.r.04	rather.r.02 (0.86)	rather.r.04 (1.00)	rather.r.04 (1.00)
sleazy.a.02	sleazy.a.01 (0.50)	overweight.a.01 (0.53)	greasy.a.02 (0.42)
immature.a.05	immature.a.01 (0.50)	tense.a.01 (0.20)	impenetrable.a.01 (0.57)
plummy.a.03	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
fairly.r.03	fairly.r.02 (0.50)	quickly.r.02 (0.50)	seriously.r.01 (0.50)
unfledged.a.02	unfledged.a.01 (0.50)	nuts.a.01 (0.17)	wounded.a.01 (0.22)
furious.a.02	furious.a.02 (1.00)	angry.a.01 (0.96)	scared.a.01 (0.45)
uncontrollable.a.03	uncontrollable.a.01 (0.50)	dirty.a.01 (0.27)	unemployed.a.01 (0.52)
smart.a.05	smart.a.01 (0.35)	long.a.01 (0.62)	slow.a.03 (0.33)
horny.a.02	horny.a.01 (0.50)	wild.a.02 (0.17)	ridiculous.a.02 (0.17)
kafkaesque.a.02	(0.00)	(0.00)	armed.a.01 (0.20)
vivid.a.03	vivid.a.02 (0.50)	tired_of.a.01 (0.20)	excruciating.a.01 (0.42)

## Appendix G. Hierarchy Reflection Score

Algorithm 1 shows the calculation of Hierarchy Reflection Score (HRS-all). To be more detailed, in our four specificity levels, for the inequalities  $d(0,1) < d(0,2)$ ,  $d(0,1) < d(0,3)$ ,  $d(0,2) < d(0,3)$ ,  $d(1,2) < d(0,2)$ ,  $d(1,2) < d(1,3)$ ,  $d(1,3) < d(2,3)$ ,  $d(2,3) < d(0,3)$ , HRS is  $\frac{1}{7}$  if one of them is satisfied; HRS is  $\frac{2}{7}$  if two of them is satisfied; . . .; HRS is  $\frac{7}{7}$  if all of them are satisfied.

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### Algorithm 1 Calculate Score for n Embeddings

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**Require:** Embeddings  $emb_0, emb_1, \dots, emb_{n-1}$

```

1:  $score \leftarrow 0$ 
2:  $totalComparisons \leftarrow 0$ 
3:  $d(p,q) \leftarrow 1 - \cos(emb_p, emb_q)$ 
4: for  $i \leftarrow 0$  to  $n - 1$  do
5:   for  $j \leftarrow 0$  to  $n - 1$  do
6:     if  $i \neq j$  then
7:       for  $k \leftarrow 0$  to  $n - 1$  do
8:         if  $k \neq i$  and  $k \neq j$  then
9:            $totalComparisons \leftarrow totalComparisons + 1$ 
10:          if  $d(i,j) > d(k,j)$  then
11:             $score \leftarrow score + 1$ 
12:          end if
13:        end if
14:      end for
15:    end if
16:  end for
17: end for
18: return  $score/totalComparisons$ 

```

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