

A step towards incremental generation of logical forms

Abstract

This paper presents AsdeCopas, an incremental module designed to interface syntax and semantics. In order to be an incremental system, AsdeCopas is based on self-contained, hierarchically organised semantic rules, that output formulas in a flat language. In this paper, we show how this system can be used in the following applications: a) semantic disambiguation; b) logical formulas construction (in Minimal Recursion Semantics); c) question interpretation.

1 Introduction

We present AsdeCopas, a syntactic-semantic incremental interface, based on self-contained, hierarchically organised rules.

AsdeCopas is integrated in a system where the input text is first transformed into a graph and then passed to AsdeCopas. As Figure 1 shows, AsdeCopas can be used:

- to incrementally enrich the graph;
- to output different types of results. Logical formulas is just one possibility.

Due to a controlled generation of variables, we can run different semantic processes in AsdeCopas and merge the results at the end. This allow us not only to merge different semantic tasks, but also to split a particular semantic task in several steps. For example, logical forms generation can be divided into three stages: a) desambiguation, where more precise semantic values are associated with each word; b) logical formulas generation, where underspecified formulas are built; c) constraints addition, here constraints are added to the underspecified formulas in order to avoid spurious ambiguities.

This paper is organised as follows: we start with the motivation for this work. Then, in section 3, we present our approach. This includes a description of the semantic rules formalism and

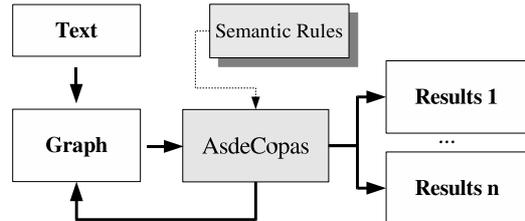


Figure 1: AsdeCopas

a brief overview of the algorithm behind AsdeCopas. In section 4 we introduce some applications. Final remarks and future directions can be found in section 5.

2 Motivation

In 1992, an exhaustive study of the Portuguese tourist resources was made by the Direcção Geral de Turismo (DGT) and afterwards the Inventory of Tourist Resources (IRT) emerged. In order to access it, multimedia “kiosks” were developed and a system called Edite REF1, REF2 was created with the purpose of being integrated in these “kiosks” and to allow database access using natural language. Edite had a set of linguistically motivated traditional modules (semantic rules associated with syntactic rules, bottom-up parser, and so on) and it soon became saturated: adding a new syntactic rule caused dramatic side effects, a new semantic value could duplicate the number of generated formulas, etc. It was this experiment that made us change our approach and invest in a more robust methodology. We found in the 5P Paradigm (Bès, 1999; Bès and Hagège, November 2001; Hagège, 2000) the background we were looking for and AsdeCopas reflects the effort of adapting to a more robust methodology.

Linking syntax with semantics is not an easy task. As Allen says in (Allen, 1995) there seems to be a structural inconsistency between syntactic structure and the structure of the logical

form.

We can ease this process by using an adequate representation language. In fact, although the concept is not new (Hobbs, 1983), state of the art frameworks such as (Mollá et al., 2003; Baldrige and Kruijff, 2002) are using flat semantic representations (see (Mollá, 2000) for details about flatness), which simplify the syntactic-semantic interface. At the same time, and because it is not reasonable to generate all the possible interpretations of a sentence, many frameworks are using representation languages that leave underspecified semantic interpretations (also an old concept (Woods, 1978)).

Nevertheless, having a flat underspecified language as the output language, does not automatically mean that we have an incremental interface. The right target language may ease the task, but it is not enough to guarantee an incremental system.

Actually, in the majority of the syntactic-semantic interfaces, the problem is the parsing method itself. Many systems base their interface in rules, that according to (Aït-Mokhtar et al., 2002) “encode hypothetical local interpretations of sub-string, yet to be validated by the production of a full parse”. This is typically what happens to syntactic-semantic bottom-up parsers where each semantic rule is associated with a syntactic rule. Even if these systems do not fail when a sub-string interpretation fails, their parsers need to deal with a combinatory explosion of multiple interpretations of words, even if syntactic conditions would allow precise values to be chosen. This is due to the fact that at each step there is not a whole vision of the (syntactic) context. An additional effect of not having access to context is that spurious ambiguities are produced.

As an example, consider the Portuguese word *qualquer* (roughly, *any*), which can take several semantic values (see (Móia, 1992) for a detailed discussion about the multiple interpretations of *qualquer*):

- In *Qualquer cão gosta de ossos* (*All dogs like bones*) it has an universal value (**univ**);
- In *Ele tem qualquer problema* (*There is some problem with him*) it has an existential value (**exist**);
- In *Ele é um jornalista qualquer* (*He is an insignificant journalist*) it has an adjectival value (**adj**);

- In *Deu-me um tio qualquer* (*It was given to me by an uncle*) it has a cardinal value (**card**).

Let us assume that on the right of a main verb in the scope of negation, *qualquer* can only take either an universal or an adjectival value. In a bottom-up parsing (Figure 2) we can only discard unnecessary values when we reach point 1, as only at that point are we able to see that the context includes negation. This can be implemented inside the program. Alternatively, the semantic rule associated with point 1 (VP \rightarrow neg V NP), can be rewritten in order to be adapted to this particular situation. None of these hypotheses seems to be a good solution.

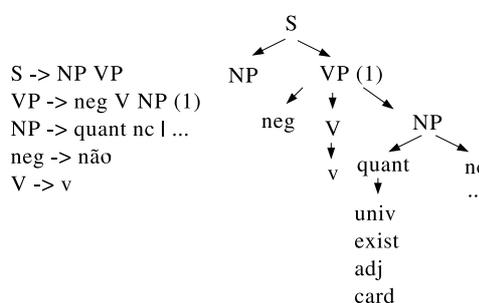


Figure 2: Grammar and *qualquer* example

Another kind of interface can be found in systems such as ExtrAns (Mollá et al., 2003), where the syntax-semantic interface is executed over dependencies. According to (Mollá and Hutchinson, 2002), the current version of ExtrAns uses either Link Grammar or the Conexor FDG parser.

In the first situation, the logical-form is constructed by a top-down procedure, starting in the head of the main dependency and following dependencies. The algorithm is prepared to deal with a certain type of dependencies, and whenever an unexpected link appears, a special recovery treatment is applied. When describing the algorithm, the authors say that most of these steps “... become very complex, sometimes involving recursive applications of the algorithm” and also that “specific particularities of the dependency structures returned by Link Grammar add complexity to this process” (Mollá and Hutchinson, 2002).

In the Conexor FDG case, the bottom up parser used has three stages. In the first one (introspection) possible underspecified predicates are associated with each word. Object predi-

cates introduce their own arguments, but other predicates remain incomplete until the second stage (extrospection). During extrospection, arguments are filled by examining the relation between each word and its head. Sometimes dummy arguments need to be assigned when the algorithm faces disconnected dependency structures. A third stage (re-interpretation) is needed to re-analyse some logical constructs. According to the authors, the algorithm cannot produce the correct argument structure for long distance dependencies.

As we will see, within AsdeCopas:

- rules allow to precise semantic values depending on the context;
- the algorithm itself is independent from the utilised dependency structures;
- there is no need to recursively apply the algorithm or to create dummy arguments due to disconnected dependency structures: in these situations, default rules are triggered;
- long distance dependencies cause no problem;
- all words, independently from their category, are mapped into formulas in one step: since rules are self-contained, they contain all the necessary information to calculate the corresponding formula.

3 Our approach

3.1 Brief overview

Salah defines an incremental rule as “a self-contained operation, whose result depends on the set of contextual restrictions stated in the rule itself. [...] If a sub-string matches the contextual restrictions, the corresponding operation applies without later backtracking” (Aït-Mokhtar et al., 2002). This is the gold property we achieved for our semantic rules.

Now the question is: how are we going to define self-contained rules if in our output we will have predicates sharing variables, scope relations to define, and so on? We propose a solution based on the following:

- First, we also use a underspecified flat language as the output representation language, using constraints to explicit scope relations.
- Then, we split each rule in three parts: a) the element or elements to transform (notice that each rule can transform more than

one element); b) the context of the elements to transform (it can be seen as a set of conditions that, being verified, indicate that the rule may be applied); c) the output (specified by a set of functions that will transform the elements according to the chosen representation).

- Finally, we assume that there is a set of fixed variables associated with each word. Each variable has the position the word occupies in the text as index. As a result, if two elements are connected (directly or not) they know each other variables, and they can be used to build their formulas.

Moreover, in order to incrementally add new information to our system without having to rewrite more general rules, semantic rules are organised in a subsumption hierarchy. As a result, if a set of rules can be applied, only the rules that do not subsume other rules are triggered.

3.2 Semantic rules

3.2.1 Syntax

Let W be a set of words, C a set of category labels, D a set of dependency labels and $_$ the empty field.

Element: $\text{elem}(w, c)$ is an element, iff:

- $w \in \{-\} \cup W$;
- $c \in \{-\} \cup C$.

Arrow: $\text{arrow}(c_1, c_2, d, l)$ is a dependency, and $\text{no_arrow}(c_1, c_2, d, l)$ a non existing dependency iff:

- $c_1, c_2 \in C$ (c_1 and c_2 are, respectively, the source and the target);
- $d \in \{-\} \cup \{L, R\}$ (d is the dependency orientation: L if it goes from right to left, R from left to right);
- $l \in \{-\} \cup D$ (l is a possibly undefined dependency label).

Semantic Rule: $[R_i] \Sigma : \Theta \mapsto \Gamma$ is a semantic rule iff:

- Σ is a possibly empty set of elements (the elements to operate on);
- Θ is a possible empty set of existing and non existing dependencies (the rule’s context);

- Γ is a set of functions, that vary according to the chosen representation language.

Extra constraints over semantic rules syntax can be found in REF3, REF4.

3.2.2 Hierarchy of rules

In the following we define the subsumption relation between semantic rules. This relation establishes the hierarchy of rules.

Element subsumption: Given

$e_1 = \text{elem}(w_1, c_1)$ and $e_2 = \text{elem}(w_2, c_2)$ from Σ , e_1 subsumes e_2 ($e_1 \sqsubseteq_e e_2$) iff:

- $c_1 \sqsubseteq c_2$;
- $(w_1 \neq _) \Rightarrow (w_2 = w_1)$.

Dependency subsumption: Given $a_1 = \text{arrow}(c_1, c_2, d_1, l_1)$ and $a_2 = \text{arrow}(c_3, c_4, d_2, l_2)$ from Θ , a_1 subsumes a_2 ($a_1 \sqsubseteq_a a_2$) iff:

- $c_1 \sqsubseteq c_3 \wedge c_2 \sqsubseteq c_4$;
- $(d_1 \neq _) \Rightarrow (d_2 = d_1)$;
- $(l_1 \neq _) \Rightarrow (l_2 = l_1)$.

Subsumption of non existing dependencies:

Given $a_1 = \text{no_arrow}(c_1, c_2, d_1, l_1)$ and $a_2 = \text{no_arrow}(c_3, c_4, d_2, l_2)$ from Θ , a_1 subsumes a_2 ($a_1 \sqsubseteq_a a_2$) iff:

- $c_1 \sqsubseteq c_3 \wedge c_2 \sqsubseteq c_4$;
- $(d_1 \neq _) \Rightarrow (d_2 = d_1)$;
- $(l_1 \neq _) \Rightarrow (l_2 = l_1)$.

Rule subsumption: Given two semantic rules $R_1 = (\Sigma_1, \Theta_1, \Gamma_1)$ and $R_2 = (\Sigma_2, \Theta_2, \Gamma_2)$, R_1 subsumes R_2 ($R_1 \sqsubseteq_r R_2$) iff:

- $(\forall e_1 \in \Sigma_1)(\exists e_2 \in \Sigma_2) (e_1 \sqsubseteq_e e_2)$;
- $(\forall a_1 \in \Theta_1)(\exists a_2 \in \Theta_2)(a_1 \sqsubseteq_a a_2)$.

Finally, if R_1 subsumes R_2 , R_2 is said to be more specific than R_1 . If both rules can apply, only the most specific rule does so.

3.3 AsdeCopas

Text is passed to AsdeCopas in the form of a graph. Each graph node is a triple, representing: a) a word; b) its associated category; c) its position (in the text). Each graph arrow is also a triple, maintaining information about: a) the position associated with the source node; b) the

position associated with the target node; c) the arrow label (possibly undefined)¹.

AsdeCopas is implemented in Prolog. It goes through each graph node and:

- identifies the rules that can be applied;
- chooses the most specific rules;
- triggers the most specific rules.

Then it continues to the next node. Notice that since rules are self-contained, the way it goes through the graph and the order of rule's application is not relevant, and results remain the same. Notice also, that at each step more than one rule can be triggered.

AsdeCopas is responsible for variable generation. Thus, instead of randomly generating variables, each variable is indexed by the position that the related word occupies in the text. Although apparently naive, this is an important feature of our system which allows different semantic processes to run at different times and results to be merged at the end.

4 Case studies

AsdeCopas is integrated in a system called Javali REF5, where a module called Ogre REF4 generates the input graph. Given the question *Qual a maior praia do Algarve?* (Which is the largest beach in Algarve?), the following figure shows the graph generated by Ogre:

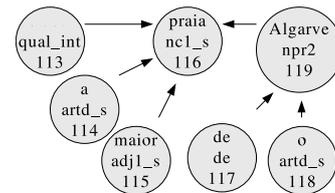


Figure 3: Ogre's output.

Next we will present three applications. First we show how AsdeCopas can be used in a disambiguation process. Then we use it to build formulas in Minimal Recursion Semantics (Copestake et al., 2001). Finally, we present an application where AsdeCopas generates logical forms from questions. Quantification is ignored in this last task.

¹Within our applications, dependencies are unlabelled, and go from dependents to the head. The motivation behind these structures came from the 5P Paradigm.

4.1 Disambiguation process

Consider again the quantifier *qualquer*. As we saw, it can have either an universal, existential, cardinal or adjectival value. Let us assume that **all** is an underspecified value (Poesio, 1994) representing all these values. If nothing is done in future tasks, it is this value that represents this word’s semantics. Alternatively, we could opt for a default value. For example, the universal value since it is the most common. Nevertheless there are some syntactic clues that can help us precisising the semantic value.

For example, on the left of the noun, on the left of the verb, it has typically an universal value (**every**). Thus, consider the following rule, where *v* stands for verb.

$$\begin{aligned} [R_1] \{ \text{elem}(\text{qualquer}, \text{qt}) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{n}, \text{R}, -), \text{arrows}(\text{n}, \text{v}, \text{R}, -) \} \\ \mapsto \{ \text{sem}(\text{qt}) = \text{every} \} \end{aligned}$$

Assuming again, as we did in section 2, that on the right of the main verb in the scope of negation, *qualquer* takes either an universal or an adjectival value (**adj**) and supposing that **every_adj** notes an underspecified semantic value for **every** and **adj** (subsumed by **all**) and that **neg** is the label category for negation, the following rule limits the values:

$$\begin{aligned} [R_2] \{ \text{elem}(\text{qualquer}, \text{qt}) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{n}, \text{R}, -), \text{arrows}(\text{n}, \text{v}, \text{L}, -), \\ \text{arrows}(\text{neg}, \text{v}, -, -) \} \\ \mapsto \{ \text{sem}(\text{qt}) = \text{every_adj} \} \end{aligned}$$

Notice that this rule is not more specific than rule R_1 . R_1 is applied when *qualquer* is connected with a noun on the left (it arrows right) of the verb. On the contrary, R_2 is applied when the noun is on the right of the verb (and also in a negation context).

Consider now the Portuguese quantifier *algum*. When it appears on the left side of a noun (**n**), it means “some” (**some**). On the right side it means “none” (**none**), unless it is in the scope of negation. In this particular situation it has an universal value. The following rules allow the right values to be chosen – in this particular situations – for this quantifier (notice that rule R_5 is more specific than rule R_4):

$$\begin{aligned} [R_3] \{ \text{elem}(\text{algum}, \text{qt}) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{n}, \text{R}, -) \} \\ \mapsto \{ \text{sem}(\text{qt}) = \text{some} \} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} [R_4] \{ \text{elem}(\text{algum}, \text{qt}) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{n}, \text{L}, -) \} \\ \mapsto \{ \text{sem}(\text{qt}) = \text{none} \} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} [R_5] \{ \text{elem}(\text{algum}, \text{qt}) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{n}, \text{L}, -) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{n}, \text{v}, \text{L}, -) \} \\ : \{ \text{arrow}(\text{neg}, \text{v}, -, -) \} \\ \mapsto \{ \text{sem}(\text{qt}) = \text{every} \}^2 \end{aligned}$$

A precise study of the disambiguation of the word *qualquer* can be found in REF6 and REF4, where we try to go as far as possible in the disambiguation process of this word (an some paraphrases of it), by using its syntactic context. Obviously, there are limits to this task, as in some situations information from semantics and pragmatics should also be taken into account to find the correct semantic value.

4.2 Logical forms generation

4.2.1 Minimal Recursion Semantics

MRS (Copestake et al., 2001) uses a flat representation (in the sense that there are no embedded structures) with explicit pointers (called handles) to encode scope effects, corresponding to recursive structures in more conventional formal semantic representations.

We have chosen this language because it has three fundamental characteristics: a) it is a flat language; b) it allows the treatment of quantification; c) it allows underspecification. Underspecified MRS structures can be converted into scope-resolved structures that, according to (Copestake et al., 1997), “correspond to those obeyed by a conventionally written bracketed structure”.

As an example, MRS represents *Qualquer menino adora algum cão*³ in the following underspecified structure (roughly, $x =_q y$ says that *y* is either in the direct or indirect scope of *x*):

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{top } p^4 \\ & \text{h1:every}(x, r1, n), \text{ h3:menino}(x), \\ & r1 =_q \text{h3}, \text{ h7:cão}(y), \\ & \text{h5:some}(y, r5, m), r5 =_q \text{h7}, \end{aligned}$$

²Notice, that by choosing the universal value, in the final formula this quantifier will no longer be in the scope of negation.

³*Every boy adores some dog.*

⁴*p* is the variable over the top.

$h4:adora(e, x, y)$

where $h1$ outscopes $h3$ and $h5$ outscopes $h7$.

Then, by means of a set of constraints, such that an MRS structure must be a tree, there should be a unique top-level handle, etc., the following readings are obtained:

$p=h1$ (wide scope “every”)
 $h1:every(x, h3, h5), h3:menino(x),$
 $h5:some(y, h7, h4), h7:c\tilde{a}o(y),$
 $h4:adora(e, x, y)$

$p=h5$ (wide scope “some”),
 $h5:some(y, h7, h1), h7:c\tilde{a}o(y),$
 $h1:every(x, h3, h4), h3:menino(x),$
 $h4:adora(e, x, y)$

In the next section we will show how to reach these formulas.

4.2.2 Toy example

We will show how to reach MRS representation for constructions as *Qualquer*₆₇ *menino*₆₈ *adora*₆₉ *a*₇₀ *Maria*₇₁⁵ and *Qualquer*₆₇₈ *menino*₆₇₉ *adora*₆₈₀ *algum*₆₈₁ *c\tilde{a}o*₆₈₂. Notice that, for expository reasons, we are simplifying the process. Actual rules use fine grained categories for quantifiers, and scope restrictions are imposed differently REF4.

In order to perform this task we use the following functions:

- *sem* returns a (default) predicate
ex: $sem(Maria) = Maria$;
- *var* returns a variable
ex: $var(Maria) = x_{71}$;
- *handle* returns a variable for an handle
ex: $handle(Maria) = h_{71}$;
- *restrictor* returns a variable for a restrictor
ex: $restrictor(Maria) = r_{71}$;
- *scope* returns a scope variable
ex: $scope(Maria) = s_{71}$.

The following rule applies to nouns, either common nouns (nc) or proper nouns (npr), everytime it finds one (because the arrow set is empty).

⁵Every boy adores Maria

$[R_1]\{elem(-, n)\}$
 $: \emptyset$
 $\mapsto \{handle(n): sem(n)(var(n))\}$

If only this rule is defined, the first sentence is translated into:

$h_{68}:menino(x_{68})$
 $h_{71}:Maria(x_{71})$

and the second sentence into:

$h_{679}:menino(x_{679})$
 $h_{682}:c\tilde{a}o(x_{682})$

Nonetheless, $h_{71}:Maria(x_{71})$ is not the representation we want for *Maria*. Instead we use the predicate NAME. Thus, we define R_2 , subsumed by R_1 (because $n \sqsubseteq npr$), and consequently more specific.

$[R_2]\{elem(-, npr)\}$
 $: \emptyset$
 $\mapsto \{handle(npr):NAME(var(npr), sem(npr))\}$

Rule R_2 is triggered instead of R_1 and we obtain for the first sentence

$h_{71}:NAME(x_{71}, Maria)$

instead of

$h_{71}:Maria(x_{71})$.

Notice that a new rule needs to be defined for the situations where the npr arrows an nc and not a v, since we want to translate *m\tilde{a}e*₈₀⁶ *Maria*₈₁ into $m\tilde{a}e(x_{80}), NAME(x_{80}, Maria)$ and not into $m\tilde{a}e(x_{80}), NAME(x_{81}, Maria)$. In order to do this, we need only to add a rule for npr (like the previous rule) to be applied when a npr arrows an nc. This rule, being more specific than rule R_2 , is applied in this particular situation. As the npr is connected with the nc, it “knows” its variable, which can be used is the associated formula.

The next rule is applied to a verb (v) when the verb has an n arrowing from left (typically the subject) and an n arrowing from right (typically the direct object), and no preposition arrows these nouns.

$[R_3]\{elem(-, v)\}$

⁶mother.

$\{ \text{arrow}(n_i, v, R, -),$
 $\text{arrow}(n_j, v, L, -),$
 $\text{no_arrow}(\text{prep}, n_i, R),$
 $\text{no_arrow}(\text{prep}, n_j, R) \}$
 $\mapsto \{ \text{handle}(v): \text{sem}(v)(\text{var}(v), \text{var}(n_i), \text{var}(n_j)) \}$

As a result, in the first sentence, *adora* is translated into:

$\text{h}_{69}: \text{adora}(\text{x}_{69}, \text{x}_{68}, \text{x}_{71})$

and, in the second one, it is translated into:

$\text{h}_{680}: \text{adora}(\text{x}_{680}, \text{x}_{679}, \text{x}_{682}).$

Notice that, at this point, although we don't have rules for all the elements within the example sentences, we already have a partial representation.

Consider now, a generic rule for quantifiers (qt):

$[\text{R}_4] \{ \text{elem}(-, \text{qt}) \}$
 $\{ \text{arrow}(\text{qt}, \text{nc}, -, -) \}$
 $\mapsto \{ \text{handle}(\text{qt}): \text{sem}(\text{qt})(\text{var}(\text{nc}), \text{restrictor}(\text{qt}),$
 $\text{scope}(\text{qt}), \text{restrictor}(\text{qt}) =_q \text{handle}(\text{nc}) \}$

Now, the results depend on previous processing: if the disambiguation task described in the previous section was performed, $\text{sem}(\text{qualquer}) = \text{every}$ and $\text{sem}(\text{algum}) = \text{some}$. Otherwise, underspecified values are used.

Let us consider that the disambiguation stage took place before. Thus, this rule adds to the first sentence:

$\text{h}_{67}: \text{every}(\text{x}_{68}, \text{r}_{67}, \text{s}_{67}),$
 $\text{r}_{67} =_q \text{h}_{68}$

and to the second sentence:

$\text{h}_{678}: \text{every}(\text{x}_{679}, \text{r}_{678}, \text{s}_{678}),$
 $\text{r}_{678} =_q \text{h}_{679}$

and

$\text{h}_{681}: \text{some}(\text{x}_{682}, \text{r}_{681}, \text{s}_{681}),$
 $\text{r}_{681} =_q \text{h}_{682}.$

Notice that we reach the underspecified formula from 4.2.1 for the first sentence.

We will conclude now this example. It should be clear that additional rules could impose extra constraints to the formula, avoiding spurious ambiguities. These rules could be added to previous rules, or, alternatively, to constitute another step towards the generation of logical forms, where constraints are imposed to underspecified formulas.

4.3 Question interpretation

From system Edite we inherited a corpus of 680 non-treated questions about tourist resources. The results of a small evaluation of 30 unrestricted questions showed a precision of 0,25 (number of final representations/30) and a recall of 0.77 (number of correct final representations/30). By “final representation” we mean a set of formulas in a flat language, representing the question. By “correct final representation” we mean a totally correct set of formulas where the exact number of expected predicates are produced, and variables are in the correct places. In this first evaluation, if we eliminate two particularly bad results (one originated 42 semantic representations and the other 21), we have a precision of 0,52. Nevertheless, the analysis is not over: 6 of the considered incorrect representations were just incomplete. For example, the statement *Quais os roteiros pedestres sinalizados em Lisboa?*⁷, originated the following formula, where AM is the predicate for adjectival modification and ? indicates the focus of the question:

$?x_{759}$
 $\text{roteiros}(x_{759})$
 $\text{AM}(x_{759}, x_{760}), \text{pedestres}(x_{760})$
 $\text{em}(x_{759}, x_{763})$
 $\text{NAME}(x_{763}, \text{Lisboa})$

The word *sinalizados* was not recognised. Thus, it does not appear in the results. Nevertheless, most of the information contained in the question is retrieved.

Within AsdeCopas framework a special effort was made with linguistic variations. As an example, both phrases *Quais os hotéis com piscina?*⁸ and *Em que hotéis há piscina?*⁹, result in the following formulas:

$?x_{22}$
 $\text{hotéis}(x_{22})$

⁷ Which are the signalised footways in Lisbon?.

⁸ Which are the hotels with a swimming pool?.

⁹ In which hotels is there a swimming pool?

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com(x22, x24)
piscina(x24)
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Note that in order to reach this result, we had just to look into the particular syntactic conditions that make verb *haver* (*to have*) behave as the preposition *com* (*with*).

5 Conclusions

We presented AsdeCopas, a syntactic-semantic interface based on self-contained rules, hierarchically organised. AsdeCopas can:

- run incrementally over a graph;
- produce partial results;
- produce results for different semantic process and merge them at the end.

AsdeCopas is integrated in a system called Javali and it has been applied to several tasks. Apart from some adjustments, AsdeCopas should be able to process any dependency structure. Notice that no constraint is made on projectivity.

In the near future we will have to study co-ordination properly. Also we intend to extend our work to English. Moreover, we would like to use a similar system in anaphora resolution.

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