

Enhancing Word Embeddings with Knowledge Extracted from Lexical Resources

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Abstract

In this work, we present an effective method for *semantic specialization* of word vector representations. To this end, we use traditional word embeddings and apply specialization methods to better capture semantic relations between words. In our approach, we leverage external knowledge from rich lexical resources such as BabelNet. We also show that our proposed *post-specialization* method based on an adversarial neural network with the Wasserstein distance allows to gain improvements over state-of-the-art methods on two tasks: word similarity and dialog state tracking.

1 Introduction

Vector representations of words (embeddings) have become the cornerstone of modern Natural Language Processing (NLP), as learning word vectors and utilizing them as features in downstream NLP tasks is the *de facto* standard. Word embeddings (Mikolov et al., 2013; Pennington et al., 2014) are typically trained in an unsupervised way on large monolingual corpora. Whilst such word representations are able to capture some syntactic as well as semantic information, their ability to map relations (e.g. synonymy, antonymy) between words is limited. To alleviate this deficiency, a set of refinement post-processing methods—called *retrofitting* or *semantic specialization*—has been introduced. In the next section, we discuss the intricacies of these methods in more detail.

To summarize, our contributions in this work are as follows:

- We introduce a set of new linguistic constraints (i.e. synonyms and antonyms) created with BabelNet for three languages: English, German and Italian.

- We introduce an improved *post-specialization* method (dubbed *WGAN-postspec*), which demonstrates improved performance as compared to state-of-the-art *DFFN* (Vulić et al., 2018) and *AuxGAN* (Ponti et al., 2018) models.
- We show that the proposed approach achieves performance improvements on an intrinsic task (word similarity) as well as on a downstream task (dialog state tracking).

2 Related Work

Numerous methods have been introduced for incorporating structured linguistic knowledge from external resources to word embeddings. Fundamentally, there exist three categories of *semantic specialization* approaches: (a) *joint methods* which incorporate lexical information during the training of distributional word vectors; (b) *specialization* methods also referred to as *retrofitting* methods which use post-processing techniques to inject semantic information from external lexical resources into pre-trained word vector representations; and (c) *post-specialization* methods which use linguistic constraints to learn a general mapping function allowing to specialize the entire distributional vector space.

In general, *joint methods* perform worse than the other two methods, and are not model-agnostic, as they are tightly coupled to the distributional word vector models (e.g. *Word2Vec*, *GloVe*). Therefore, in this work we concentrate on the *specialization* and *post-specialization* methods. Approaches which fall in the former category can be considered local specialization methods, where the most prominent examples are: *retrofitting* (Faruqui et al., 2015) which is a post-processing method to enrich word embeddings with knowledge from semantic

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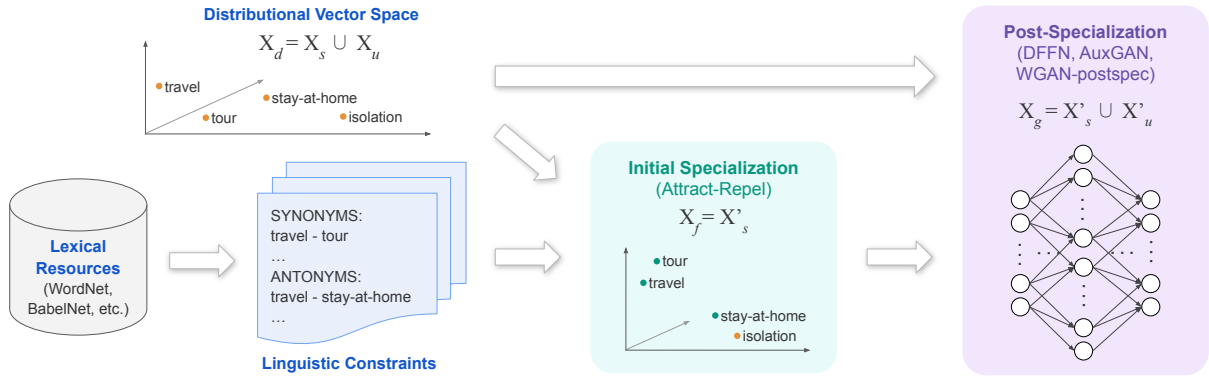


Figure 1: Illustration of the semantic specialization approach.

lexicons, in this case it brings closer semantically similar words. *Counter-fitting* (Mrkšić et al., 2016) likewise fine-tunes word representations; however, conversely to the *retrofitting* technique it counterfits the embeddings with respect to the given similarity and antonymy constraints. *Attract-Repel* (Mrkšić et al., 2017b) uses linguistic constraints obtained from external lexical resources to semantically specialize word embeddings. Similarly to *counter-fitting* it injects synonymy and antonymy constraints into distributional word vector spaces. In contrast to *counter-fitting*, this method does not ignore how updates of the example word vector pairs affect their relations to other word vectors.

On the other hand, the latter group, *post-specialization* methods, performs global specialization of distributional spaces. We can distinguish: *explicit retrofitting* (Glavaš and Vulić, 2018) that was the first attempt to use external constraints (i.e. synonyms and antonyms) as training examples for learning an explicit mapping function for specializing the words not observed in the constraints. Later, a more robust *DFFN* (Vulić et al., 2018) method was introduced with the same goal – to specialize the full vocabulary by leveraging the already specialized subspace of seen words.

3 Methodology

In this paper, we propose an approach that builds upon previous works (Vulić et al., 2018; Ponti et al., 2018). The process of specializing distributional vectors is a two-step procedure (as shown in Figure 1). First, an *initial specialization* is performed (see §3.1). In the second step, a global specialization mapping function is learned, allowing to generalize to unseen words (see §3.2).

3.1 Initial Specialization

In this step a subspace of distributional vectors for words that occur in the external constraints is specialized. To this end, fine-tuning of seen words can be performed using any *specialization* method. In this work, we utilize *Attract-Repel* model (Mrkšić et al., 2017b) as it offers state-of-the-art performance. This method allows to make use of both synonymy (*attract*) and antonymy (*repel*) constraints. More formally, given a set \mathcal{A} of *attract* word pairs and a set of \mathcal{R} of *repel* word pairs, let \mathcal{V}_S be the vocabulary of words seen in the constraints. Hence, each word pair (v_l, v_r) is represented by a corresponding vector pair $(\mathbf{x}_l, \mathbf{x}_r)$. The model optimization method operates over mini-batches: a mini-batch \mathcal{B}_A of synonymy pairs (of size k_1) and a mini-batch \mathcal{B}_R of antonymy pairs (of size k_2). The pairs of negative examples $T_A(\mathcal{B}_A) = \left[(\mathbf{t}_l^1, \mathbf{t}_r^1), \dots, (\mathbf{t}_l^{k_1}, \mathbf{t}_r^{k_1}) \right]$ and $T_R(\mathcal{B}_R) = \left[(\mathbf{t}_l^1, \mathbf{t}_r^1), \dots, (\mathbf{t}_l^{k_2}, \mathbf{t}_r^{k_2}) \right]$ are drawn from $2(k_1 + k_2)$ word vectors in $\mathcal{B}_A \cup \mathcal{B}_R$.

The negative examples serve the purpose of pulling synonym pairs closer and pushing antonym pairs further away with respect to their corresponding negative examples. For synonyms:

$$A(\mathcal{B}_A) = \sum_{i=1}^{k_1} \left[\tau(\delta_{att} + \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{t}_l^i - \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{x}_r^i) + \tau(\delta_{att} + \mathbf{x}_r^i \mathbf{t}_r^i - \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{x}_r^i) \right] \quad (1)$$

where τ is the rectifier function, and δ_{att} is the similarity margin determining the distance between synonymy vectors and how much closer they should be comparing to their negative examples. Similarly,

the equation for antonyms is given as:

$$R(\mathcal{B}_R) = \sum_{i=1}^{k_2} [\tau(\delta_{rep} + \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{x}_r^i - \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{t}_l^i) + \tau(\delta_{rep} + \mathbf{x}_l^i \mathbf{x}_r^i - \mathbf{x}_r^i \mathbf{t}_r^i)] \quad (2)$$

A distributional regularization term is used to retain the quality of the original distributional vector space using L_2 -regularization.

$$Reg(\mathcal{B}_A, \mathcal{B}_R) = \sum_{\mathbf{x}_i \in V(\mathcal{B}_A \cup \mathcal{B}_R)} \lambda_{reg} \|\hat{\mathbf{x}}_i - \mathbf{x}_i\|_2 \quad (3)$$

where λ_{reg} is a L_2 -regularization constant, and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_i$ is the original vector for the word x_i .

Consequently, the final cost function is formulated as follows:

$$C(\mathcal{B}_A, \mathcal{B}_R) = A(\mathcal{B}_A) + R(\mathcal{B}_R) + Reg(\mathcal{B}_A, \mathcal{B}_R) \quad (4)$$

3.2 Proposed Post-Specialization Model

Once the *initial specialization* is completed, *post-specialization* methods can be employed. This step is important, because local specialization affects only words seen in the constraints, and thus just a subset of the original distributional space \mathbf{X}_d . While *post-specialization* methods learn a global specialization mapping function allowing them to generalize to unseen words \mathbf{X}_u .

Given the specialized word vectors \mathbf{X}'_s from the vocabulary of seen words \mathcal{V}_S , our proposed method propagates this signal to the entire distributional vector space using a generative adversarial network (GAN) (Goodfellow et al., 2014). Hence, in our model, following the approach of Ponti et al. (2018), we introduce adversarial losses. More specifically, the mapping function is learned through a combination of a standard L_2 -loss with adversarial losses. The motivation behind this is to make the mappings more natural and ensure that vectors specialized for the full vocabulary are more realistic. To this end, we use the Wasserstein distance incorporated in the generative adversarial network (WGAN) (Arjovsky et al., 2017) as well as its improved variant with gradient penalty (WGAN-GP) (Gulrajani et al., 2017). For brevity, we call our model *WGAN-postspec*, which is an umbrella term for the *WGAN* and *WGAN-GP* methods implemented in the proposed *post-specialization* model. One of the benefits of using WGANs over

vanilla GANs is that WGANs are generally more stable, and also they do not suffer from vanishing gradients.

Our proposed *post-specialization* approach is based on the principles of GANs, as it is composed of two elements: a generator network G and a discriminator network D . The gist of this concept, is to improve the generated samples through a min-max game between the generator and the discriminator.

In our *post-specialization* model, a multi-layer feed-forward neural network, which trains a global mapping function, acts as the generator. Consequently, the generator is trained to produce predictions $G(\mathbf{x}; \theta_G)$ that are as similar as possible to the corresponding initially specialized word vectors \mathbf{x}'_s . Therefore, a global mapping function is trained using word vector pairs, such that $(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}'_i) = \{\mathbf{x}_i \in \mathbf{X}_s, \mathbf{x}'_i \in \mathbf{X}'_s\}$. On the other hand, the discriminator $D(\mathbf{x}; \theta_D)$, which is a multi-layer classification network, tries to distinguish the generated samples from the initially specialized vectors sampled from \mathbf{X}'_s . In this process, the differences between predictions and initially specialized vectors are used to improve the generator, resulting in more realistically looking outputs.

In general, for the GAN model we can define the loss \mathcal{L}_G of the generator as:

$$\mathcal{L}_G = - \sum_{i=1}^n \log P(\text{spec} = 1 | G(\mathbf{x}_i; \theta_G); \theta_D) - \sum_{i=1}^m \log P(\text{spec} = 0 | \mathbf{x}'_i; \theta_D) \quad (5)$$

While the loss of the discriminator \mathcal{L}_D is given as:

$$\mathcal{L}_D = - \sum_{i=1}^n \log P(\text{spec} = 0 | G(\mathbf{x}_i; \theta_G); \theta_D) - \sum_{i=1}^m \log P(\text{spec} = 1 | \mathbf{x}'_i; \theta_D) \quad (6)$$

In principle, the losses with Wasserstein distance can be formulated as follows:

$$\mathcal{L}_G = -\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n D(G(\mathbf{x}_i; \theta_G); \theta_D) \quad (7)$$

and

$$\mathcal{L}_D = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m D(\mathbf{x}'_i; \theta_D) - \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n D(G(\mathbf{x}_i; \theta_G); \theta_D) \quad (8)$$

An alternative scenario with a gradient penalty (WGAN-GP) requires adding gradient penalty λ coefficient in the Eq. (8).

4 Experiments

Pre-trained Word Embeddings. In order to evaluate our proposed approach as well as to compare our results with respect to current state-of-the-art *post-specialization* approaches, we use popular and readily available 300-dimensional pre-trained word vectors. `Word2Vec` (Mikolov et al., 2013) embeddings for English were trained using skip-gram with negative sampling on the cleaned and tokenized Polyglot Wikipedia (Al-Rfou’ et al., 2013) by Levy and Goldberg (2014), while German and Italian embeddings were trained using CBOW with negative sampling on WacKy corpora (Dinu et al., 2015; Artetxe et al., 2017, 2018). Moreover, `GloVe` vectors for English were trained on Common Crawl (Pennington et al., 2014).

Linguistic Constraints. To perform *semantic specialization* of word vector spaces, we exploit linguistic constraints used in previous works (Zhang et al., 2014; Ono et al., 2015; Vulić et al., 2018) (referred to as *external*) as well as introduce a new set of constraints collected by us (referred to as *babelnet*) for three languages: English, German and Italian. We use constraints in two different settings: *disjoint* and *overlap*. In the first setting, we remove all linguistic constraints that contain any of the words available in SimLex (Hill et al., 2015), SimVerb (Gerz et al., 2016) and WordSim (Leviant and Reichart, 2015) evaluation datasets. In the *overlap* setting, we let the SimLex, SimVerb and WordSim words remain in the constraints. To summarize, we present the number of word pairs for English, German and Italian constraints in Table 1.

Let us discuss in more detail how the lists of constraints were constructed. In this work, we use two sets of linguistic constraints: *external* and *babelnet*. The first set of constraints was retrieved from WordNet (Fellbaum, 1998) and Roget’s Thesaurus (Kipfer, 2009), resulting in 1,023,082 synonymy and 380,873 antonymy word pairs. The second set of constraints, which is a part of our contribution, comprises synonyms and antonyms obtained using NASARI lexical embeddings (Camacho-Collados et al., 2016) and BabelNet (Navigli and Ponzetto, 2012). As NASARI provides lexical information for BabelNet words in five languages (EN, ES, FR,

DE and IT), we collected each word with its related BabelNetID (a sense database identifier) to extract the list of its synonyms and antonyms using BabelNet API.

Furthermore, to improve the list of Italian words, we also followed the approach proposed by [Succameli and Lenci \(2017\)](#). The authors provided a new dataset of semantically related Italian word pairs. The dataset includes nouns, adjectives and verbs with their synonyms, antonyms and hypernyms. The information in this dataset was gathered by its authors through crowdsourcing from a pool of Italian native speakers. This way, we could concatenate Italian word pairs to provide a more complete list of synonyms and antonyms.

Similarly, we refer to the work of [Scheible and Schulte im Walde \(2014\)](#) that presents a new collection of semantically related word pairs in German, which was compiled through human evaluation. Relying on GermaNet and the respective JAVA API, the list of the word pairs was generated with a sampling technique. Finally, we used these word pairs in our experiments as external resources for the German language.

Initial Specialization and Post-Specialization.

Although, initially specialized vector spaces show gains over the non-specialized word embeddings, linguistic constraints represent only a fraction of their total vocabulary. Therefore, *semantic specialization* is a two-step process. Firstly, we perform *initial specialization* of the pre-trained word vectors by means of *Attract-Repel* (see §2) algorithm. The values of hyperparameter are set according to the default values: $\lambda_{reg} = 10^{-9}$, $\delta_{sim} = 0.6$, $\delta_{ant} = 0.0$ and $k_1 = k_2 = 50$. Afterward, to perform a specialization of the entire vocabulary, a global specialization mapping function is learned. In our *WGAN-postspec* proposed approach, the *post-specialization* model uses a GAN with improved loss functions by means of the Wasserstein distance and gradient penalty. Importantly, the optimization process differs depending on the algorithm implemented in our model. In the case of a vanilla GAN (*AuxGAN*), standard stochastic gradient descent is used. While in the *WGAN* model we employ RMSProp (Tieleman and Hinton, 2012). Finally, in the case of the *WGAN-GP*, Adam (Kingma and Ba, 2015) optimizer is applied.

		English			German			Italian		
		<i>overlap</i>	<i>disjoint simlex/verb</i>	<i>disjoint wordsim</i>	<i>overlap</i>	<i>disjoint simlex/verb</i>	<i>disjoint wordsim</i>	<i>overlap</i>	<i>disjoint simlex/verb</i>	<i>disjoint wordsim</i>
Synonyms	<i>babelnet</i>	3,522,434	3,521,366	3,515,111	1,358,358	1,087,814	1,348,006	975,483	807,399	806,890
	<i>external + babelnet</i>	4,545,045	4,396,350	3,515,111	1,360,040	1,089,338	1,349,612	976,877	808,605	808,225
Antonyms	<i>babelnet</i>	1,024	843	1,011	139	136	136	99	99	98
	<i>external + babelnet</i>	381,777	352,099	378,365	1,823	1,662	1,744	883	769	851

Table 1: Number of synonym and antonym word pairs for English, German and Italian in two settings: *babelnet*, *external + babelnet*.

		English											
		GLOVE						WORD2VEC					
		<i>overlap</i>			<i>disjoint</i>			<i>overlap</i>			<i>disjoint</i>		
	SL	SV	WS	SL	SV	WS	SL	SV	WS	SL	SV	WS	
ORIGINAL		0.407	0.280	0.655	0.407	0.280	0.655	0.414	0.272	0.593	0.414	0.272	0.593
ATTRACT-REPEL	<i>a</i>	0.781	0.761	0.597	0.407	0.280	0.655	0.778	0.761	0.574	0.414	0.272	0.593
	<i>b</i>	0.407	0.282	0.655	0.407	0.282	0.655	0.414	0.275	0.594	0.414	0.275	0.593
	<i>c</i>	0.784	0.763	0.595	0.407	0.282	0.655	0.776	0.763	0.560	0.414	0.275	0.593
DFFN	<i>a</i>	0.785	0.764	0.600	0.645	0.531	0.678	0.781	0.763	0.571	0.553	0.430	0.593
	<i>b</i>	0.699	0.562	0.703	0.458	0.324	0.679	0.351	0.237	0.506	0.387	0.245	0.578
	<i>c</i>	0.783	0.764	0.597	0.646	0.535	0.684	0.777	0.763	0.560	0.538	0.381	0.594
AUXGAN	<i>a</i>	0.789	0.764	0.659	0.652	0.552	0.642	0.782	0.762	0.550	0.581	0.434	0.602
	<i>b</i>	0.734	0.647	0.627	0.417	0.284	0.658	0.405	0.269	0.587	0.395	0.260	0.581
	<i>c</i>	0.796	0.767	0.639	0.659	0.560	0.669	0.782	0.755	0.588	0.583	0.438	0.603
WGAN	<i>a</i>	0.809	0.767	0.652	0.661	0.553	0.642	0.780	0.749	0.602	0.580	0.446	0.608
	<i>b</i>	0.722	0.635	0.654	0.452	0.279	0.671	0.392	0.262	0.590	0.397	0.269	0.580
	<i>c</i>	0.808	0.765	0.653	0.663	0.549	0.665	0.771	0.737	0.614	0.586	0.440	0.611
WGAN-GP	<i>a</i>	0.810	0.751	0.669	0.660	0.548	0.669	0.776	0.742	0.600	0.586	0.462	0.605
	<i>b</i>	0.722	0.622	0.646	0.461	0.282	0.676	0.396	0.254	0.567	0.398	0.267	0.581
	<i>c</i>	0.798	0.732	0.715	0.660	0.551	0.672	0.775	0.614	0.590	0.585	0.463	0.609

Table 2: Spearman’s ρ correlation scores on SimLex-999 (SL), SimVerb-3500 (SV) and WordSim-353 (WS). Evaluation was performed using constraints in three settings: (*a*) *external*, (*b*) *babelnet*, (*c*) *external + babelnet*.

5 Results

5.1 Word Similarity

We report our experimental results with respect to a common intrinsic word similarity task, using standard benchmarks: SimLex-999 and WordSim-353 for English, German and Italian, as well as SimVerb-3500 for English. Each dataset contains human similarity ratings, and we evaluate the similarity measure using the Spearman’s ρ rank correlation coefficient. In Table 2, we present results for English benchmarks, whereas results for German and Italian are reported in Table 3.

Word embeddings are evaluated in two scenarios: *disjoint* where words observed in the benchmark datasets are removed from the linguistic constraints; and *overlap* where all words provided in the linguistic constraints are utilized. We use the *overlap* setting in a downstream task (see §5.2).

In the tasks we report scores for *Original* (non-specialized) word vectors, *initial specialization* method *Attract-Repel* (Mrkšić et al., 2017b), and three post-specialization methods: *DFFN* (Vulić et al., 2018), *AuxGAN* (Ponti et al., 2018) and our proposed model *WGAN-postspec* (in two scenarios: *WGAN* and *WGAN-GP*).

The results suggest that the *post-specialization* methods bring improvements in the specialization of the distributional word vector space. Overall, the highest correlation scores are reported for the models with adversarial losses. We also observe that the proposed *WGAN-postspec* achieves fairly consistent correlation gains with GLOVE vectors on the SimLex dataset. Interestingly, while exploiting additional constraints (i.e. *external + babelnet*) generally boosts correlation scores for German and Italian, the results are not conclusive in the case of English, and thus they require further investigation.

	German WORD2VEC				Italian WORD2VEC				
	<i>overlap</i>		<i>disjoint</i>		<i>overlap</i>		<i>disjoint</i>		
	SL	WS	SL	WS	SL	WS	SL	WS	
ORIGINAL	0.358	0.538	0.358	0.538	0.356	0.563	0.356	0.563	
ATTRACT-REPEL	<i>a</i>	0.360	0.537	0.358	0.538	0.376	0.568	0.364	0.565
	<i>b</i>	0.358	0.538	0.358	0.538	0.366	0.568	0.366	0.559
	<i>c</i>	0.360	0.538	0.358	0.538	0.378	0.566	0.367	0.564
DFFN	<i>a</i>	0.366	0.422	0.370	0.452	0.381	0.512	0.365	0.519
	<i>b</i>	0.354	0.538	0.348	0.538	0.364	0.559	0.361	0.560
	<i>c</i>	0.359	0.541	0.358	0.533	0.376	0.561	0.369	0.559
AUXGAN	<i>a</i>	0.331	0.532	0.325	0.535	0.362	0.561	0.348	0.560
	<i>b</i>	0.369	0.552	0.373	0.561	0.361	0.559	0.364	0.563
	<i>c</i>	0.369	0.564	0.365	0.556	0.365	0.566	0.368	0.563
WGAN	<i>a</i>	0.331	0.528	0.327	0.531	0.361	0.558	0.344	0.558
	<i>b</i>	0.364	0.558	0.367	0.559	0.359	0.553	0.367	0.559
	<i>c</i>	0.371	0.559	0.364	0.560	0.367	0.567	0.370	0.562

Table 3: Spearman’s ρ correlation scores on SimLex-999 (SL) and WordSim-353 (WS). Evaluation was performed using constraints in three settings: (a) *external*, (b) *babelnet*, (c) *external + babelnet*.

	GLOVE
ORIGINAL	0.797
ATTRACT-REPEL	0.817
DFFN	0.829
AUXGAN	0.836
WGAN-POSTSPEC	0.838

Table 4: DST results for English.

5.2 Dialog State Tracking

We also evaluate our proposed approach on a dialog state tracking (DST) downstream task. This task is a standard language understanding task, which allows to differentiate between word similarity and relatedness. To perform the evaluation we follow previous works (Henderson et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2016; Mrkšić et al., 2017b). Concretely, a DST model computes probability based only on pre-trained word embeddings. We use Wizard-of-Oz (WOZ) v.2.0 dataset (Wen et al., 2017; Mrkšić et al., 2017a) composed of 600 training dialogues as well as 200 development and 400 test dialogues.

In our experiments, we report results with a standard *joint goal accuracy* (JGA) score. The results in Table 4 confirm our findings from the previous word similarity task, as initial semantic *specialization* and *post-specialization* (in particular *WGAN-postspec*) yield improvements over original distributional word vectors. We expect this conclusion to hold in all settings; however, additional experiments for different languages and word em-

beddings would be beneficial.

6 Conclusion and Future Work

In this work, we presented a method to perform *semantic specialization* of word vectors. Specifically, we compiled a new set of constraints obtained from BabelNet. Moreover, we improved a state-of-the-art *post-specialization* method by incorporating adversarial losses with the Wasserstein distance. Our results obtained in an intrinsic and an extrinsic task, suggest that our method yields performance gains over current methods.

In the future, we plan to introduce constraints for asymmetric relations as well as extend our proposed method to leverage them. Moreover, we plan to experiment with adapting our model to a multilingual scenario, to be able to use it in a neural machine translation task. We make the code and resources available at: <https://github.com/mbiesialska/wgan-postspec>

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