

ALIN Results for OAEI 2022

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Abstract

Alin is a system for interactive ontology matching. Since 2020, ALIN applies natural language processing (NLP) techniques to standardize the concept names of the ontologies that participate in the matching process. In the current version, we modified the grammars used during the process in order to improve the quality of the alignments. This paper describes the participation of ALIN at OAEI 2022 and discusses its results.

Keywords

ontology matching, Wordnet, interactive ontology matching, ontology alignment, interactive ontology alignment, natural language processing

1. Presentation of the system

Due to the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in general, a large amount of data repositories became available as valuable assets for enabling integrated data exchange platforms across organizations. However, those repositories are highly semantically heterogeneous, which hinders their integration. Ontology Matching has been successfully applied to solve this problem, by discovering mappings between two distinct ontologies which, in turn, conceptually define the data stored in each repository. The Ontology Matching process seeks to discover correspondences (mappings) between entities of different ontologies, and this may be performed manually, semi-automatically or automatically [1]. The interactive approach, which considers the knowledge of domain experts through their participation during the matching process, has stood out among semi-automatic ones [2]. A domain expert is an expensive, scarce, and time-consuming resource; when available, however, this resource has improved the achieved results. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvements [2], as evidenced by the most recent results from the evaluation of interactive tools in the OAEI¹ (Ontology Alignment Evaluation Initiative). ALIN [3] is a system for interactive ontology

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matching which has been participating in all OAEI editions since 2016, with increasingly improved results in the Anatomy interactive track.

The main contribution of this new version of ALIN was the introduction of modifications to the used regular grammars. These modifications aimed to standardize more terms used in the ontologies. This standardization improves the result of the lexical and semantic metrics used in ALIN, which leads to a better mapping selection to be chosen automatically or presented to the domain expert.

1.1. State, Purpose and General statement

Interactive ontology matching systems select mappings for domain expert evaluation. ALIN selects many of these mappings through semantic and lexical metrics. Concept name standardization could lead to a more correct value in the metrics used. No standardized names may cause ALIN not to select correct mappings for evaluation by the domain expert.

Since its 2020 version, ALIN uses Natural Language Processing (NLP) resources such as regular grammars (in fact, their equivalent regular expressions) and context-free grammars along with their respective lexical analyzers (scanners) and syntax analyzers (parsers).

These NLP resources make it possible to translate different patterns used in the two ontologies into unique one. This standardization allows ALIN to select better mappings for the domain expert to evaluate.

To perform the standardization step, since 2020 ALIN has a new phase before the program runs. In this phase, an NLP expert provides grammars, and their respective scanners and parsers, to the ontologies. ALIN uses these scanners and parsers during the execution of the program. This standardization step is possible in an interactive ontology matching system because:

1. We know before the program runs which ontologies ALIN will match, as we need to look for experts in the domain of ontologies to interact with the program;
2. The process of searching, meeting, and scheduling a day available for the expert to participate in the process can take a long time, probably a few days.

We can use this time of a few days until the execution of the program to develop the necessary grammars, scanners, and parsers for the ontologies. To test the new techniques, the authors of this paper played the role of the NLP experts.

1.2. Specific techniques used

During its matching process, ALIN handles three sets of mappings: (i) Accepted, which is a set of mappings definitely to be retained in the alignment; (ii) Selected, which is a set of mappings where each is yet to be decided if it will be included in the alignment; and (iii) Suspended, which is a set of mappings that have been previously selected, but (temporarily or permanently) filtered out of the selected mappings.

Given the previous definitions, ALIN procedure follows 5 Steps, described as follows:

1. Select mappings: select the first mappings and automatically accepts some of them. Detailed in the 'Description of the used techniques' paragraph below;

2. Filter mappings: suspend some selected mappings, using lexical and semantic criteria for that;
3. Ask domain expert: accepts or rejects selected mappings, according to domain expert feedback;
4. Propagate: select new mappings, reject some selected mappings or unsuspend some suspended mappings (depending on newly accepted mappings);
5. Go to step 3 as long as there are undecided selected mappings.

All versions of ALIN (since its first OAEI participation) follow this general procedure. Since its 2020 version, ALIN included a new step where an NLP expert develops grammars and their respective scanners and parsers to the concept names of the ontologies. ALIN uses these scanners and parsers to standardize the concept names of the ontologies and thus improve the generated alignment. The new step can lead to, for example, correcting spelling errors and unifying different spellings for the same concept name. More detailed examples of possible standardization of concept names are presented in [4]. ALIN uses the developed scanners and parsers in step 1 of the procedure.

1.2.1. Description of the used techniques

- Step 1. ALIN runs the scanners and the parsers for each concept name of the ontologies, modifying it and standardizing it. ALIN uses a blocking strategy where it discards all data properties and object properties of the ontologies. So, in this step, ALIN selects only concept mappings, using linguistic similarities between the standardized concept names. ALIN automatically accepts concept mappings whose standardized names are synonyms. ALIN uses the Wordnet and domain-specific ontologies (the FMA Ontology in the Anatomy track) to find synonyms between entities.
- Step 2. ALIN suspends the selected mappings whose entities have low lexical and semantic similarity. We use the Jaccard, Jaro-Wrinkler, and n-gram lexical metrics to calculate the lexical similarity of the selected mappings. We based the process of choosing the similarity metrics used by ALIN on the result of these metrics in assessments [5]. These suspended mappings can be further unsuspending later, returning to the status of selected mappings, as proposed in [6].
- Step 3. At this point, the domain expert interaction begins. ALIN sorts the selected mappings in a descending order according to the sum of similarity metric values. The sorted selected mappings are submitted to the domain expert. ALIN can present up to three mappings together to the domain expert if a full entity name in a candidate mapping is the same as another entity name in another candidate mapping.
- Step 4. Initially, the set of selected mappings contains only concept mappings. At each interaction with the domain expert, if he accepts the mapping, ALIN (i) removes from the set of selected mappings all the mappings that compose an instantiation of a mapping anti-pattern [7][8] (we explain mapping anti-patterns below in the 'Mapping anti-patterns' paragraph) with the accepted mappings; (ii) selects data property (as proposed in [9]) and object property mappings related to the accepted concept mappings; (iii) unsuspending all concept mappings whose both entities are subconcepts of the concept of an accepted mapping (as proposed in [6]).

- Step 5. The interaction phase continues until there are no selected mappings.

1.2.2. Mapping anti-patterns

An anti-pattern mapping can be a logical inconsistency, a construction constraint on the ontology, or an alignment constraint. An ontology may have construction constraints, such as a concept cannot be equivalent to its superconcept. The alignment between two ontologies can have constraints. For example, an entity of ontology O cannot be equivalent to two entities of the ontology O' . Anti-pattern mapping is a combination of mappings that generates a problematic alignment, i.e., a logical inconsistency or a violated constraint.

In its 2022 version, we have modified the formal grammars used by ALIN to improve the quality of the generated alignments.

1.3. Link to the system and parameters file

ALIN is available ² as a SEALS package (It can be run with MELT).

2. Results

Interactive ontology matching is the focus of the ALIN system.

The comparison between the participation of ALIN in 2021 and 2022 (Tables 5 and 6) shows an improvement in the quality of the generated alignment, attesting the effectiveness of the changes in the grammars.

2.1. Comments on the participation of ALIN in non-interactive tracks

The modified grammars generated an increase in the F-Measure, recall and precision of non-interactively generated alignments in the Anatomy track (Table 1).

Table 1

Participation of ALIN in Anatomy Non-Interactive Track in OAEI 2021[10] and OAEI 2022[11]

Year	Precision	Recall	F-measure
2021	0.983	0.726	0.835
2022	0.984	0.752	0.852

In the Conference track, the modified grammars have increased the F-Measure and recall in relation to the 2020 results (ALIN's last participation on this track) (Table 2).

2.2. Comments on the participation of ALIN in interactive tracks

In the Anatomy interactive track, ALIN 2022 was better than LogMap in quality (F-Measure) but worse in total requests (Table 3). In the Conference track, ALIN 2022 was, again, better than LogMap in quality (F-Measure) but worse in total requests (Table 4).

²osf.io/download/636ad4ca2ea85404b3a2d5be/?direct%26mode=render

Table 2

Participation of ALIN in Conference Non-Interactive Track (rar2-M3, F1-Measure) in OAEI 2020[12] and OAEI 2022[13]

Year	Precision	Recall	F-measure
2020	0.82	0.43	0.56
2022	0.82	0.44	0.57

Table 3

Participation of ALIN in Anatomy Interactive Track - OAEI 2022[14] - Error Rate 0.0

Tool	Precision	Recall	F-measure	Total Requests
ALIN	0.987	0.92	0.952	579
LogMap	0.988	0.846	0.912	388

Table 4

Participation of ALIN in Conference Interactive Track - OAEI 2022[14] - Error Rate 0.0

Tool	Precision	Recall	F-measure	Total Requests
ALIN	0.919	0.744	0.822	309
LogMap	0.886	0.61	0.723	82

2.3. ALIN participations in OAEI 2022 and OAEI 2021

ALIN improved the quality of the alignment generated for both the Anatomy and the Conference tracks. The number of interactions has also increased on both tracks (Tables 5 and 6).

The quality of the alignment generated by ALIN depends on the correct feedback from the domain expert, as ALIN uses this feedback to select new mappings. When ALIN selects wrong mappings, the quality of the generated alignment tends to decrease. The comparison between the two runs of Table 7 shows a quality decline sharper in the current version.

Table 5

Participation of ALIN in Anatomy Interactive Track - OAEI 2016[15]/2017[16]/2018[17]/2019[18]/2020[12]/2021[10]/2022[14] - Error Rate 0.0

Year	Precision	Recall	F-measure	Total Requests
2016	0.993	0.749	0.854	803
2017	0.993	0.794	0.882	939
2018	0.994	0.826	0.902	602
2019	0.979	0.85	0.91	365
2020	0.988	0.856	0.917	360
2021	0.986	0.887	0.934	404
2022	0.987	0.92	0.952	579

Table 6

Participation of ALIN in Conference Interactive Track - OAEI 2016[15]/2017[16]/2018[17]/2019[18]/2020[12]/2021[10]/2022[14] - Error Rate 0.0

Year	Precision	Recall	F-measure	Total Requests
2016	0.957	0.735	0.831	326
2017	0.957	0.731	0.829	329
2018	0.921	0.721	0.809	276
2019	0.914	0.695	0.79	228
2020	0.915	0.705	0.796	233
2021	0.916	0.718	0.799	281
2022	0.919	0.744	0.822	309

Table 7

F-Measure of ALIN in Anatomy Interactive Track - OAEI 2021[10]/OAEI 2022[14] and in Conference Interactive Track - OAEI /2021[10]/2022[14] - with Different Error Rates

	Year	Error rate 0.0	Error rate 0.1
Anatomy	2021	0.934	0.899
	2022	0.952	0.905
	Year	Error rate 0.0	Error rate 0.1
Conference	2021	0.799	0.698
	2022	0.822	0.705

3. General comments

The analysis of OAEI 2022 results showed that ALIN has improved the quality of the generated alignment in the interactive track. But an increase in the expert error rate caused a sharper fall in the alignment quality. The number of interactions with the expert was increased (from 281 to 309 requests in the Conference track and from 404 to 579 requests in the Anatomy track).

3.1. Conclusions

In this new version, ALIN (ALIN 2022) addresses the problem of improving the standardization of terms to achieve better results with lexical and semantic metrics. That aims to improve the selection of mappings, both those that ALIN will automatically place in the alignment and those that ALIN will present to the domain expert. To address this problem, we put new patterns in the regular grammars that ALIN uses to standardize ontology terms.

This grammar modification proved to be efficient in increasing the F-measure but increasing the number of interactions with the domain expert.

Since OAEI 2020, ALIN has been improving grammars to improve the standardization of terms used in ontologies, and always with an improvement in F-measure, which shows how greater standardization of ontologies terms gives positive results when used.

In future versions, we intend to implement new grammar changes to further improve the quality of the generated alignment.

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