Automatic term and relation extraction for medical question answering system

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Preface

“When you are on the right path, don’t worry, all the universe will help you,” said Madeleine Gardeur, the Director of International Relations of the University of Groningen (RUG), when I met her at the edge of my period as an employee of this university. This quote immediately pops up in my mind when I started writing this preface. This quote seems to show that her vision about me, when she met me for the first time in Bandung 9 years ago, is true. And this quote also reminds me to all people in my universe who had helped and influenced me during the last 7 years, since I prepared my master and PhD degrees, conducting researches, and now when this thesis shows it shape.

The first meeting in Bandung, when Madeleine Gardeur; Alex Klugkist, the director of the University Library of Groningen; and Robert Manurung, the head of the Library of the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) and the Liaison Officer of RUG for Indonesia gave presentations at an Indonesian Digital Library Network meeting, had turned my life’s journey from the East to the West. At that time, I had to choose between a scholarship to Japan, or a national digital library project that will be funded by the Canadian government. They supported me to take the project since it would be very beneficial for a knowledge sharing in Indonesia, and they offered me a PhD programme at RUG afterward. Now, 9 years later, both of my dreams have came true: the digital library network and the higher education. I am enormously thankful to them for all their helps.

I am especially grateful to my professor John Nerbonne and my supervisor Gosse Bouma for all their guidance and support. They were always available when I need to discuss my ideas and experiments; and their reading and comments on this thesis were very fast, precise, and critical. I also want to thank the members of my reading committee, Adang Suwandi Ahmad, Hans Hillege, and Guus Schreiber for their comments on my work.

After several months I started my PhD programme, I just realized that so many people have contributed in its preparation, and the road toward inviting me and my family was not easy. I would like to thank Lydia Hollander, Anne Bouwmeester, Tim Zwaagstra, Anneke Toxopeus, and all related people of the Office of the University and the International Service Desk. Without their help, I and my family would not be here as now.

Working at two places and dividing time as a researcher at the Alfa-informatica division and as a software developer at the University Library, excluding the time for my family, were a great challenge to me. During that period I learnt that having ‘a feeling at home’ is important. I thank Jori Mur and Lon neke van der Plas for being my friendly roommates and my ‘Three MusQAteers’ pals at the division. I also thank Gosse Bouma, Gertjan van Noord, Joerg Tiedeman, Jori,
and Lonneke for the discussion and collaboration in the IMIX group. I would also like to thank Henny Klein for giving me opportunities as an Information Retrieval experiment assistant and as a guest presenter in her class. As a result, several master students were willing to take their internship projects with me at the Library. And I would like to thank all people from Alfa-informatica division, CLCG group, and all the secretaries from the Cluster Netherlands, also to the members of the Schilpad thesis acceleration group for their support at the end of the funding period: Geoffrey Andogah, Jacky Benavides, Jantien Donkers, Jori Mur, Lonneke van der Plas, and Erik-Jan Smiths.

I am grateful to having an opportunity to work at the University Library Groningen, where I learnt electronic journal usage statistics and Semantic Web. For this, I would like to thank the members of the board Alex Klugkist and Marjolein Nieboer, my bosses Peter van Laarhoven and Henk Ellermann, and my colleagues at the Digital Library Facilities division Anneloes Dagenaar, Mischa van Delden, Henk Druiven, Frank den Hollander, Andre Keyzer, ‘Om’ Harry Krafft, Johannes Nikolai, and Lulas de Vries. I want to thank Jan Willem Hoepman and all staffs of the Cataloguing Department with whom I shared the (big) room, Ane van der Leij and Anita Verhoeven for all discussions, and all staffs of the Library for their support. I would also like to thank master students Junte Zhang, Proscovia Olango, Rene van der Ark, Peter Scholing, and Martijn Eikenhorst for their internships in the semantic web project.

Being not in Groningen anymore after my contract was over, I should admit that my living in this city was so warm, colorful, and unforgettable. It is not the place that matter, but how we make matters in that place is the most important one. And there, I found happiness to be a member of deGromiest (Indonesian Moslem Society in Groningen). Many thanks to Bang Fahmi family, Mas Amal and Mbak Heni family, Om Anton family, Budhe Nanie, Uwak Asiyah family, Pak Tri family, Pak Mimbing family, Eko Hardjanto family, Guntur family, Indra family, Mas Chalid family, Nandang family, Wangsa family, Iging family, Arramel family, Teguh family, Mbak Ike and ‘WB-family’, and all other members of deGromiest and Indonesian families for all support, help, and being my big family that chills up my life in this city. Many thanks also to Pak Gani, Intan, Ari, and my other anak kos ‘tenants’ for all help and stays as my family. I would also like to thank all members of PPI-G (Indonesian Student Association in Groningen) for friendship and collaboration in the miniature of Indonesia.

Special thanks to Tim Van de Cruys and Barbara Plank for being my paraminfs. I am looking forward to seeing you by my side while I defend my thesis. Also, this thesis would not be finished without a help from Lonneke who has translated my (long) summary into Dutch, for which I am especially grateful.

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Alhamdulillah, all praise to You, who arranges my universe beautifully.