Statistical Analysis of Textual Data: A New Perspective for Analyzing Written Communication Produced in FC Contexts

Statistical Analysis of Textual Data (SATD) is an innovative and interesting line of research because it deals with complex objects (texts) and calls for expertise deriving from different disciplines. Consequently, it poses great challenges and provides great opportunities in terms of applied research.

The talk focuses on some of the opportunities provided by SADT illustrating examples of the use of simple lexicon-based quantitative measures with corpora of texts produced during sessions of Facilitated Communication (FC).

The available techniques proved suitable to identify the characteristic features of written communications of individuals with autism, in general, and to deal with the issue of authorship attribution, in particular. The talk raises questions which can be answered thanks to the methods implemented in the SATD framework and other procedures which may be used to identify the characteristics of texts (and their writers) and compare texts (or groups of texts). Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the approach and its connection to traditional qualitative approaches are discussed.

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