

Chapter 9

Using “On-the-Fly Corpus Linguistics” to Systematically Derive Word Definitions Using Inductive Abstraction and Reductionist Correlation Analysis: Considering Seductive and Gratifying Properties of Computer Jargon

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ABSTRACT

Computer jargon is something that can either unite people, or draw them apart. This chapter looks at definitions of the terms, ‘trolling,’ ‘flame,’ ‘flame-war’ and ‘lurking,’ as presented in specialist dictionaries, newspapers and through a survey of laypersons. The aim of the chapter was to see whether it was possible to objectively define terms using a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. The study finds that objectively determining a definition of a term requires a bigger dataset than is used for qualitative studies. It further notes that whilst there is a lot in common with expert definitions, the problem with drawing definitions from others is that whilst it might produce objective definitions they might not be accurate ones.

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INTRODUCTION

It is known that literacy play significant role in why some people show addictive behaviours on social media platforms like Facebook (Koenig, 2008). Equally, it is known that the avoidance of computer jargon in computer systems can improve the seductive properties of computer systems, through promoting “niceness” and “friendliness” (Lupton, 1996). One case study found that after studying in Hong Kong for several months, an individual gradually became addicted to English computer jargon when conversing classmates and peers in Cantonese (Li, 2008). Freedom of speech and distributed communication are known to be associated with digital addiction, as most online communities where such conversations can occur are characterized by the introduction of computer jargon, slang, and professionalisms (Yakovleva & Kulikova, 2011). However, it is known that using computer jargon can reduce the motivation to participation in online environments, where some find it intimidating (Hakkarainen, 2012). It is therefore necessary to devise a method for assessing the understanding of computer jargon by Internet users to allow for harmony between, for instance, people of different generations (Bishop, 2014c).

BACKGROUND

Too many without a self-awareness of their own philosophy of science, or their ‘grand-narrative’ or ‘meta-narrative,’ there are so many certainties in life. The way they see science, perceived through the lens of stereotypes of scientists wearing white-coats and doing experiments in a lab, is how science is done. They then assume any belief they have which is scientific must automatically be valid and have got through the process used in the natural sciences, namely the neo-classical philosophy of science called ‘positivism.’ Positivism is based on the premises that it is possible to objectively view the world through calibrated instruments and equations, and that hypothesis testing is how those tools can be most objectively used. Those people who see the only way to conduct science as being through this neo-classical positivist approach often fail to realise that the instruments and equations they are using were designed by other people using their own mental faculties to socially construct those paradigms using rigorous internal mental logic resulting from observing, abstracting, reducing and confirming. If it were not for the likes of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein using their mind to understand the universe, positivists today would not have the means to – perhaps in a delusional way – think they can objectively observe the same universe. Equally, if it were not for Ronald Fisher and Karl Pearson, among others, devising statistical principles like correlation (r) and significance (p) then those positivists who use statistics in a perhaps delusional way – thinking they are being objective with a tool that is not their or someone else’s mind – would have no credibility in arguing that quantitative approaches to science have any more benefit in research in terms of generalizability than qualitative ones. It is worth noting, however, that qualitative researchers who use qualitative data to draw out common themes in data – often called phenomenologists – are using the same mental faculties that were used by Newton, Einstein, Fisher and Pearson to derive the tests that quantitative research claim to be more objective. This chapter therefore seeks to show how it is possible to use both the mind the researcher through inductive data abstraction and the tests devised by Fisher and Pearson to systematically derive definitions of words, based on their wider use by many different sources.

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