Annotation Guidelines for Sentiment Analysis of Sustainable Michelin Restaurant Reviews (2nd version)

Purpose

Annotation of customer reviews of Michelin-starred restaurants that prioritize sustainability. We're focused on understanding how customers feel about their dining experiences, and each sentence reviewed will provide valuable insights into their perceptions.

Your Task

As an annotator, you will assess the sentiment of each sentence in a review—whether it is positive, negative, or somewhere in between (on a scale from 1 to 5). Your contributions will directly shape our analysis, helping us to accurately capture what people enjoy (or do not) about these dining experiences.

General Principles

1. **Preserve original formatting:** Do not manually correct or adjust any errors in tokenization, punctuation, or empty lines. These should remain unchanged and be noted as tokenization errors.
2. **Punctuation:** Punctuation marks are considered neutral and should not influence the sentiment rating.
3. **Divided reviews:** If a single review is split into two parts but clearly belongs together, each part should still be annotated separately according to its own sentiment. For review-level evaluations, this distinction is less important, but for sentence-level analysis, annotate both parts independently.
4. **General statements:** A general statement without subjective evaluation is neutral unless the surrounding context of the review indicates a clear positive or negative sentiment. For sentence-level annotation, assess each sentence in the context of the entire review.
5. **Contextual annotation:** Always interpret sentences within the broader context of their paragraph or review. This includes:
   a. Annotating each sentence in alignment with the overall tone of the paragraph.
   b. Adapting sentence-level annotations based on the surrounding sentiment, even when the sentence appears neutral or ambiguous in isolation.
6. **Sentence-level and paragraph-level annotation:** The guidelines extend to annotating individual sentences in addition to full reviews.

Rating Scale

Use the five-point scale to rate each sentence:

1. **Negative (1):** Strong dissatisfaction or negative feelings.
    - Example: "The service was terrible, and the food was inedible."
2. **Mostly Negative (2):** Criticism or negative sentiment, but less intense.
    - Example: "The food was okay, but the service was lacking."
3. **Neutral (3):** Facts or statements without a clear positive or negative sentiment.
    - Example: "The restaurant is located in a busy area."
4. **Mostly Positive (4):** Appreciation or mild enjoyment.
    - Example: "The ambiance was pleasant, and the staff was friendly."
5. **Positive (5):** Strong positive sentiment or enthusiasm.
    - Example: "This was one of the best dining experiences I've ever had!"

Important Note on Star Ratings

To ensure your annotations are as impartial as possible, you will not see the restaurant's Michelin star rating. This allows you to focus purely on the words and customer sentiment that is revealed through the text presented.

How to Annotate

1. **Rate each sentence separately**: Go through each sentence one at a time, applying the rating scale above.
2. **Contextualize each sentence within the paragraph**: When annotating, always read and interpret each sentence in light of the entire paragraph from which it was taken. The context of the paragraph can provide essential clues about the reviewer's overall tone, intended meaning, and subtle nuances. For example, certain phrases might appear neutral or ambiguous out of context but reveal clear sentiment when considered alongside surrounding sentences. This approach helps capture nuances, such as sarcasm or implied sentiment, that might be lost in an isolated sentence.
3. **Consider the context**: Some sentences will touch on specific aspects like food, service, or ambiance. Make sure your rating reflects the sentiment about that particular aspect.
4. **Stay consistent**: Try to apply the same standards across different reviews. If you're unsure about a sentence, refer to the examples provided to guide your decision.
5. **Add comments if needed**: If a sentence is tricky or does not fit neatly into the categories, feel free to add a comment explaining your reasoning. This can help us understand your thought process and refine future analyses.

Special Considerations

1. **Mixed Sentiments:**
   - Example: "The food was amazing, but the waiting time was unacceptable."
   - **Guidance:** Break it down by segment or rate based on the overall tone. If the positive and negative sentiments balance each other, focus on the stronger sentiment.
2. **Sarcasm or irony:**
   - Example: "Oh, what a delight it was to sit for an hour without service!"
   - **Guidance:** Sarcastic comments should be rated as Negative (1), even if they use positive words.
3. **Ambiguous Sentences:**
   - Example: "The atmosphere was nice, but the food was just okay."
   - **Guidance:** Focus on the predominant sentiment. If unclear, use Neutral (3).
4. **Comparative Statements:**
   - Example: "This restaurant is better than the last Michelin place I visited."
   - **Guidance:** Focus on the implied sentiment about the current restaurant.

Handling Language Issues and Machine-Translated Sentences

1. **Focus on intent:** Even if the sentence structure is awkward or unclear due to machine translation, attempt to determine the underlying sentiment using contextual clues.
2. **Flag unclear cases:** For ambiguous or poorly translated sentences, annotate to the best of your ability and add a comment explaining your interpretation. Flag the sentence for review if necessary.
3. **Consistency:** Maintain consistency in annotation across all reviews. When in doubt, assign a Neutral (3) rating for sentences that are too unclear.

Additional Tips

- **Stay objective:** Focus on the reviewer's words without letting personal opinions influence your ratings.
- **Trust your instincts:** Often, your first impression of the sentence sentiment is correct. Verify only if necessary.
- **Add comments:** For challenging sentences, include a brief explanation to help refine future analyses.