Reddit MSG Annotation Scheme

Study

Thank you for helping me with my research! In the research, I am considering the stance of Reddit users towards monosodium glutamate (MSG; more info follows). Reddit is an online discussion platform.

I have collected comments from users that mention MSG. For each user, I want to annotate whether they have a positive, neutral, or negative stance towards MSG. Since annotation relies on judgments that are highly subjective, it is necessary to have multiple annotators to decrease and measure the degree of subjectivity.

Background

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a cooking salt that imparts umami taste to dishes. MSG is commonly used in Asian (particularly Chinese) cuisines, as well as in many processed foods and seasoning mixes.

MSG has a history of stigmatization: in 1968, MSG was blamed for causing "chinese restaurant syndrome", which described effects of headaches and migraine that people suffered following eating at a Chinese restaurants. Early studies confirmed these harmful effects of MSG. However, these studies were later critized for being methodologically very weak, and recent research has not found adverse health effects associated with moderate MSG consumption. Some people have attributed the stigma around MSG as originating in xenophobia.

Despite the findings of recent research that suggest that MSG is reasonably fine, surveys find that MSG remains unpopular in the eyes of the public.

Annotation

The aim of the annotation is to assign one of three labels to a user based on their comments. The annotation file will be send to you. In the left column are the comments of users, the different comments seperated by "____NEXT COMMENT____" statements. In the right column, you will have to fill in one of three labels:

- **positive** (+) whenever the comments of the user indicate a positive view of MSG. This might manifest in multiple ways, e.g.:
  - A user mentioning that they use MSG
  - A user proposing a recipe that contains MSG
  - A user mentioning that MSG is tasty
  - A user mentioning that MSG is safe
- **neutral** (.) whenever the view of a user is not clearly negative or positive.
- **negative** (-)whenever the comments of the user indicate a negative view of MSG. This might manifest in multiple ways, e.g.:
  - A user mentioning that they would not use MSG
  - A user mentioning that MSG is untasty
  - A user mentioning that MSG is unsafe/gives them adverse health symptoms

Please fill in one of the three symbols (+,. or -) in the right column of each row.

Interpreting the stance of people based on reddit comments is inherently diffucult, as people often do not explicitly express their view. Furthermore, Reddit comments exist within the context a Reddit thread, which means relevant information might be missing. For these reasons, when

annotating, it is often required that you have to 'fill in the gaps', and assign the label that you think is the most probable, even if you do not have full information.

Thanks a lot for the help, I really appreciate it! If you have any questions, let me know.