Sentiment analysis tool comparison using Vader and SentiStrength

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*Abstract* - This project aims to investigate the sentiment polarity (positive, negative, neutral) and intensity of hotel reviews and compare it to human coded ratings. Correlation between the human ratings and sentiment intensity by the tool can be regarded as evidence that the analysis is correct. The interesting part is not that much sentiment itself, but rather argumentation to the polarity. We will detect Pearson’s correlation coefficient values by comparing SentiStrength and NLTK Vader sentiment analysis tools and aim to find contrast evidence from individual raters. We will compare how well these tools are able to correlate the sentiments of user’s reviews and study what are the strengths and weaknesses of those tools and how do they perform overall compared to each other and together. We will analyze what kind of categories relate to each review and how do they correlate to positive or negative sentiments. We will also investigate what kind of named entities each review has and how do their presence correlate to the positive or negative sentiments.

During this study, several hypothesis will be tested. Firstly hypothesis on the relation of argumentation on positive and negative sentiments. Secondly we will test hypothesis related to review ambiguity. Are ambiguous reviews shorter or do they have bad readability.

*Index Terms* – Comparison, opinion mining, sentiment analysis, tool.

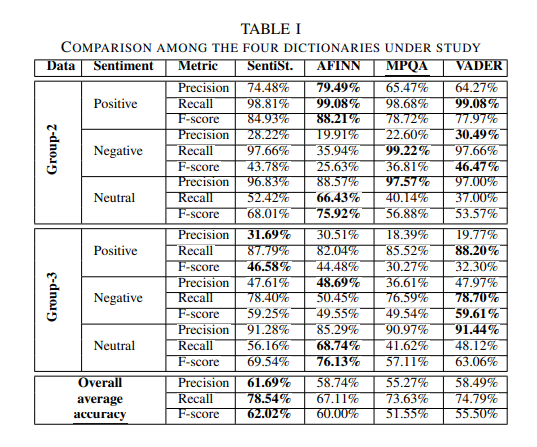
Introduction

With web, social media and digitalization the growth in user generated content has opened a huge opportunity for businesses to find new ways to generate value from data. Since the early 2000s, opinion mining or sentiment analysis has become one of the most researched area in natural language processing. [1, 2] As sentiment can be seen as an attitude or a thought as a response to a feeling [1], it is interesting in context like customer satisfaction and NPS surveys. However, the more interesting are the facts related to the sentiments [10]. The nature of sentiment analysis is interdisciplinary. It can be approached from computer science point of view, social science and for example management science [2].

This study investigates opinion mining or sentiment analysis mainly from the lexicon based tooling perspective. Similar studies have been made with these and other lexicon based tools with similar and different datasets. [6,7] However, neither of these studies look into argumentation as such, which is important for any business to draw conclusions on their products and services.

For businesses nowadays it is not difficult to start analyzing sentiments of their customers in their social media channels, customer support and service channels or customer reviews and feedbacks. Especially for English. The challenges with tooling can be many though. When choosing the tool, it is important to understand the purpose. [3, 4] Using sentiment analysis for social media posts requires different tool than running a tool used for news analysis. [4]

One must also understand other parts, such as developer community, programming language, portability and other aspects typically evaluated when buying similar tools. One must also consider the usage patterns of the tooling. Is it going to be used off the shelf with standard configuration, or is it going to be trained with data. [3] There are similar studies, that have compared Vader and SentiStrenght approach [6,7]. Study by Al-Shabi [7] analysed 5 most important lexicon based sentiment analysis tools, including Vader and SentiStrength. The study revealed that classification with Vader was more accurate among negative and positive sentiments. The study was conducted with Twitter data. We will conduct this study using two tools, Vader and SentiStrenght with data from Kaggle containing ten thousand hotel reviews in English. The data will be used as is without largely preprocessing it. Study by Zibran [6] analyzed 4 lexicon based tools, including SentiStrenght and Vader. The study used domain specific dictionaries to improve on the accuracy. The performance of the tools in dedicated or special domains such as Software Engineering was known to be less accurate. The study concluded that “We have studied the prospect and effectiveness of four distinct dictionary building methods for sentiment detection in SE texts. Based on a quantitative analysis over a benchmark dataset, we have found that dictionaries (i.e., SentiStrength, AFINN, and VADER) created using simple lexicon-based approach perform better (for SA in SE text) than those (i.e., MPQA), which include complex techniques for incorporating subjectivity and contextual sense.” However, this study did not conclude a clear winner, but SentiStrength was seen performing better with negative sentiments.



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An empirical analysis by Singha et al [5] showed that there is a high correlation between customer ratings and sentiments. These types of findings set a stage for our study too.

The study by Thelwall et all also shows that SentiStrenght is performant enough with different types of social web texts [9]. But the argumentation analysis is needed as a step forward from sentiment analysis to determine the impact of a certain review [10].

METHODOLOGY

Our study concentrated on English hotel reviews data from Kaggle.com. The analysis flow can be illustrated with following diagram:

Diagram

Description automatically generated

We started by downloading the data and manually inspecting it. We became aware that dataset contained hotel responses within the reviews, but we could not find a way to clean and process those ten thousand reviews. Hotel reviews in nature are such that they can be longer or shorter. We acknowledged that the impact of those responses within data to be analyzed makes the analysis less trustworthy and too positive, but we agreed that within that amount of source data, the impact is not significant [ollaanko tätä mieltä? ]. The study commences that the data collection process has been erroneous but there is enough data to determine results. We investigated 3 different datasets and chose the one with more garbage reviews. The results seemed too clean, so we decided to choose the one with more variance in the data. Finally, the data was cleaned up by removing unnecessary columns to speed up the process. Reviews.text and reviews.ratings were taken as is and also review.id was constructed. With this step, encoding was ensured to be utf-8 throughout the project.

The data was fed into SentiStrength java client. That was seen more performant than the windows client. The SentiStrength dictionary is constructed by combining LIWC and GI dictionaries similar to VADER, and also includes lists of emoticons, negations and intensifiers. SentiStrength is a sentiment analysis tool that performs with human level accuracy in English social media texts [8]. It is lexicon based, designed to give a strength to a term. For example “love” has a stronger positivity than “like” [9].

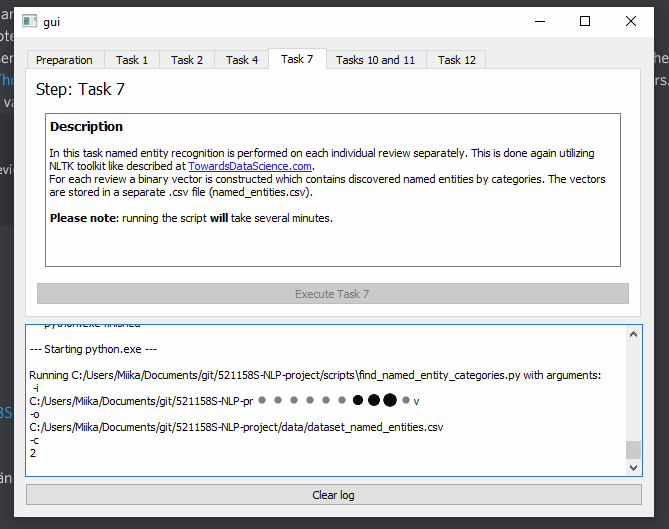
We also ran the data through AWS Comprehend, which is a tool offered by Amazon to find insights and relationships from data using machine learning techniques. Setting up AWS comprehend to analyse the dataset was easy, but due to the cost it was decided not to be used in this analysis. While the cost seemed bearable, the unpredictability of the billing rules was seen as a threat to the project.

To replace AWS Comprehend, we decided to use NLTK Vader. Vader by Hutto and Gilbert [11] in their study present and evaluate Vader, Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner. Vader is a simple lexicon and rule-based model for sentiment analysis. It is specifically attuned to polarity and intensity of sentiment expressed in social media texts. It works well on texts from other domains too [12]. The study by Hutto et al [11] revealed that based on correlation coefficient, Vader performs and even outperforms individual human raters in classifying polarity. It is proven that Vader sentiment lexicon is gold-standard quality and has been validated by humans.

The source data was transformed by both tools and saved as .csv file. [Describe here the output of both tools as one csv. Describe also the plot here ]

For the preprocessed, parsed and analysed data, we started to enrich it. We decided to use Empath tool for it. Empath is a lexicon mined from modern texts. It groups words into topics, and is human validated. Empath uses the combination of machine learning and crowd sourcing. Compared to the well established LIWC categories, Empath is much wider. It contains over 200 categories compared to the 40 categories of LIWC. And as our language evolves, so does Empath. [14] Empath categories were parsed by Python scripts and written into the reviews database.

Next step was to include named entities into the database. The problem we observed with nltk named entities was that it’s recognition capabilities are limited. It recognized capitalized nouns as “persons”. The places, like Best Western, were recognized as two different places [TARKISTA]. We decided to use binary format on whether the entity is in place or not for the review. The given type presence was associated with sentiment polarity to analyze the potential correlation between those. The ratio of certain types of named entities vs. negativity & positivity was

GUI is build using QT and a user can run the application with simple step by step user interface: 

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TABLE I

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Points | Type of Text | Type Styles |
| 8  10  8  8  8  10  10  10  10  10  10  11  24 | Table text  Figure and Table Headings  Figure and Table Captions  Footnote  Reference list  Abstract  Index Terms  Section Titles  Main Text and Equations  Subheadings  Author email  Author name  Title | UPPERCASE  Small Caps  **Bold**  **Small Caps, Bold**  *Italic*, Left justified  Title Case |



Figure I

Logo of the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers

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*2jk ∂u/∂z = ∂2u/∂x2 + k2 (n2* - β*2) u*  (1)

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References

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