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PAPER TITLE: I can already guess your answer: Predicting Respondent Reactions during Dyadic Negotiation

1. What is the main problem or issue that the authors are addressing?

Ans: The authors are trying to predict the outcomes of negotiations based on both verbal and non-verbal cues.

1. Provide a short summary of the authors’ approach/argument.

Ans: The authors designed various incentive scenarios for business undergraduate students, 40 males and 44 females. They participated in 42 conversations, in which the genders of the participants were the same to control the effect of gender on negotiations, the negotiations had 3 motivations, co-operative, individualistic and competitive. The data was annotated using the ELAN software by 2 coders. For predictions SVM were used with radial basis kernels that were trained and tested.

1. What are the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the approach?

Ans: The weakness of the approach is that the negotiations were done under controlled environments, which may not invoke natural reactions from the participants. The participants were from the same educational background, the topic of the negotiations was also pre-determined. For example, if there were CS majors with business majors and they were asked to talk about something technical then the reactions would have been different. The influence of gender was also controlled by using same-sex negotiations.

1. Provide at least 1 question regarding the paper that you’d like to address during class discussion.

Ans: I would like to discuss the fact that there is significant work done in multi-modal signal processing which deploys neural networks to understand human emotions, and social robotics which helps robots in understanding emotions. Little effort was made in following a data annotation model similar to that. I believe that would have helped as the data can be structured in many different ways.

The study doesn’t use state of the art machine learning algorithms like Neural Networks which are quiet effective function approximators in these kind of scenario, especially the RNN. For more information regarding RNNs refer to the works of Dr. Sepp Hochreiter, which makes the understanding of contextual data using previous states.