Machine Learning-Based Model for Sentiment and Sarcasm Detection

Aya H. Allam¹, Hanya M. Abdallah¹, Eslam Amer², Hamada A. Nayel¹

¹Department of Computer Science
Faculty of Computers and Artificial Intelligence, Benha University
²Faculty of Computer Science, Misr International University

{aya.allam,hanya.abdelhak,hamada.ali}@fci.bu.edu.eg,
eslam.amer@miuegypt.edu.eg

Abstract

Within the last few years, the number of Arabic internet users and Arabic online content is in exponential growth. Dealing with Arabic datasets and the usage of non-explicit sentences to express an opinion are considered to be the major challenges in the field of natural language processing. Hence, sarcasm and sentiment analysis has gained a major interest from the research community, especially in this language. Automatic sarcasm detection and sentiment analysis can be applied using three approaches, namely supervised, unsupervised and hybrid approach. In this paper, a model based on a supervised machine learning algorithm called Support Vector Machine (SVM) has been used for this process. The proposed model has been evaluated using ArSarcasm-v2 dataset. The performance of the proposed model has been compared with other models submitted to sentiment analysis and sarcasm detection shared task.

1 Introduction

Today, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are considered new forms of social interaction, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. Social networking sites allow users to exchange ideas, post updates, reviews, and comments while sharing their broader interests. Due to the extreme usage of social networks, it is crucial to apply related analysis tasks automatically. These tasks ranges over sarcasm detection, offensive language detection (Nayel and L., 2019; Nayel, 2020), author profiling (Nayel, 2019), irony detection (Nayel et al., 2019) and sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis is precious as it allows us to capture an overview of social network users’ opinions towards specific topics, products, or services. Sentiment analysis refers to the use of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML) to identify and extract subjective information in a piece of writing. Sarcasm is defined as an indirect way to express an opinion as the written is literally not the intended meaning (Wilson, 2006). It is considered a widespread phenomenon in social media, which is difficult to analyse, not just automatically but also for humans (Maynard and Greenwood, 2014). Although it has a significant effect on sentiment, it is ignored in social media analysis because it is considered too difficult to handle. So, sarcasm is still considered a challenge in sentiment analysis.

Due to the importance of sentiment analysis, many research works have been developed in this research field. However, most of these studies have focused on English and other Indo-European languages (Lunando and Purwarianti, 2013). Actually, few studies have been conducted on sarcasm and sentiment analysis in morphologically rich languages such as Arabic (Boudad et al., 2018). Three main variations of the Arabic language exist classical Arabic, which is the language of the Qur’an (Islam’s Holy Book); Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and dialectical Arabic. MSA is an Arabic language form used greatly in formal speeches and writings. Dialectical Arabic refers to all oral varieties spoken in daily communication. These vary from one Arab country to another and from one region of the same country to another.

The work in Arabic Sarcasm Sentiment analysis using a variety of Arabic dialects started in 2008. Besides, a set of research work has been rapidly conducted such as (Abdul-Mageed et al., 2011; Al-Ghadhban et al., 2017; Alsayat and Elmitwally, 2020; Karoui et al., 2017). The authors use different ML approaches such as supervised, unsupervised, and hybrid approaches to detect sarcasm and sentiment. These approaches carry out the classification task as it classifies text into either sarcasm or not. However, more work is still needed to achieve better accuracy.
In this paper, we present a model to detect sarcastic and sentiment Arabic tweets from real ones using SVM. The model is developed in the framework of the shared task on sarcasm and sentiment detection in Arabic (Abu Farha et al., 2021). The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the dataset, section 3 gives a detailed description of how the systems were built and trained. In Section 4, the system is evaluated, and the results are discussed. The paper is concluded in Section 6 after a general discussion is introduced in section 5.

2 Dataset
For both tasks, ArSarcasm-v2 (Abu Farha et al., 2021) a dataset has been distributed to all participants. It contains a labeled training set with 12,548 tweets and a blind test set contains 3,000 unlabelled tweets. Table 1 contains a statistics of the training set for both tasks. In addition to the two labels for both tasks, dialect information about a tweet is also given.

3 System
The proposed system, as described in Figure 1, combines three main phases: preprocessing phase, the feature extraction phase, and the classification phase.

![Figure 1: Proposed system structure](http://www.nltk.org/_modules/nltk/metrics/scores.html)

3.1 Preprocessing Phase
In social media communications, users use slang words instead of formal words such as emojis, numbers, etc. Hence, it is a must to clean and prepare data for the feature extraction process. At first, We changed the encoding of the dataset file to UTF-8 to recognize Arabic characters. Then, We preprocessed the tweets by removing the hashtags, emojis, numbers, and URLs. This process reduces the dimensionality of the problem low. Hence, it speeds up the classification process and makes it more accessible.

3.2 Feature Extraction Phase
In this phase, unigram or bigram can be used as features for the Arabic tweets. Several methods can be used to determine the significance of each feature in the whole text, such as Term Frequency (TF) or and Term Frequency Inverse Document Frequency (TF/IDF).

For term weights, we used TF/IDF calculated as follows:-

\[
t_j = tf_j \times \log \left( \frac{N + 1}{df_j + 1} \right)
\]

where \( tf_j \) is the total number of occurrences of term \( t_j \) in the given tweet, \( df_j \) is the number of tweets in which the token/term \( t_j \) occurs and \( N \) is the total number of tweets.

3.3 Classification Phase
Sentiment Analysis can be classified into three levels: document level, sentence level and aspect level. In this phase, the document level is adopted where the whole piece of writing is dealt with as one unit and is assigned to a particular class label. SVM is a linear classifier that have been designed binary classification problem (Theodoridis and Koutroumbas, 2009). It can be adjusted for multi class classification problems using one-vs-one or one-vs-many strategies. SVM is one of the strongest and accurate algorithms used with Arabic text (Nayel, 2020, 2019; Nayel et al., 2019).

4 Experiments and Results
4.1 Evaluation Metric
The performance evaluation of sarcasm and sentiment detection shared task is measured as the accuracy of the system in addition to class-wise accuracy which is calculated using Precision (P), Recall (R) and F1 measure \(^1\). For each class, \( P \) is the number of tweets correctly classified over the total number of tweets that system classified as same class. \( R \) is the number of tweets correctly classified over the actual number of tweets of the class. \( F1 \) measure is the harmonic mean of \( P \) and \( R \), which can be calculate as follow:-

\[
F1 = \frac{2 \times P \times R}{P + R}
\]

\(^1\)http://www.nltk.org/_modules/nltk/metrics/scores.html
| Task                  | Class | No. of Tweets | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|-------|---------------|----------------|
| Sarcasm Detection    | TRUE  | 2,168         | 17.28%         |
|                      | FALSE | 10,380        | 82.72%         |
| Sentiment Analysis   | POS   | 2,180         | 17.37%         |
|                      | NEG   | 4,621         | 36.83%         |
|                      | NEU   | 5,747         | 45.80%         |

Table 1: Statistics of training set for both tasks

The official metric of the sarcasm detection task is F1-score of the sarcastic class (F1-sarcastic), while macro average of the F-score of the positive and negative classes (F-PN) will be the official metric of the sentiment detection task.

4.2 Results

In developing phase, cross-validation approach with five folds has been used to train different classification algorithms for each subtask. These algorithms are: SVM, Linear Regression (LR), Naïve Bayes (NB), Complementary Naïve Bayes (CNB) and Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD). The performance of all classifiers during development phase are given in Table 2.

| Sentiment | Sarcasm | Sentiment | Sarcasm |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| SVM       | 85.55%  | 84.22%    |         |
| CNB       | 83.47%  | 82.97%    |         |
| NB        | 78.92%  | 78.10%    |         |
| LR        | 65.89%  | 64.03%    |         |

Table 2: 5-fold Cross-Validation performance of different classifiers for both tasks

From Table 2 it is clear that SVM outperforms all other algorithms in both tasks.

4.2.1 Official Submission Results

The proposed model has been applied to the blind test set and the output of both tasks have been submitted to the shared task. Table 3 shows the detailed results of the proposed model for both subtasks.

| Official Metric | Sarcasm | Sentiment |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| Accuracy        | 0.7460  | 0.5980    |
| Macro-F1        | 0.5457  | 0.5291    |
| Precision       | 0.7048  | 0.5434    |
| Recall          | 0.5602  | 0.5207    |

Table 3: The official results of our submissions

5 Discussion

Sarcasm and sentiment detection in Arabic is a widely NLP studied problem. The supervised learning approach outperforms unsupervised and semi-supervised methods in this detection process. Note also that some supervised classifiers such as SVM have repeatedly been applied. The effectiveness of this classifier is the reason behind this choice. The same thing can be said about the used feature; n-grams are frequently chosen as features.

6 Conclusion

Sarcasm and sentiment detection is one of the most useful and challenging tasks. In this paper, we proposed SVM based classifier model to detect Arabic sarcasm and sentiment in Twitter. The results are produced from training the model using SVM classifier, one of the accurate classification algorithms. The model achieves moderate accuracies, which are relatively high, especially regarding Arabic text. The performance can be improved using different weighting scores such as word embeddings. Deep learning based models also can be used for the training purpose.
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