

# Workshop 'Computational Text Analysis'

## Step 2: Bags-of-words

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## Goals of this workshop

1. Automation of data collection
2. **Analysis of textual data**
  - unsupervised approaches (e.g., topic models)
  - supervised approaches (e.g. text classification)
3. Analysis of images-as-data



## What is computational text analysis? II

- It's a form of **content analysis** in which we **transform raw texts** that consists of characters **into numeric vectors** to identify relations and regularities within and between different textual inputs. (Benoit 2009)
- While it is often used in exploratory analyses, it should **not** be thought and used as an **atheoretical** tool (Bonikowski and Nelson 2022)



## What we can do with text analysis I

**In the 1990s, the Government's task will be to provide an economic environment which encourages enterprise - the mainspring of prosperity. Our aims must be:**

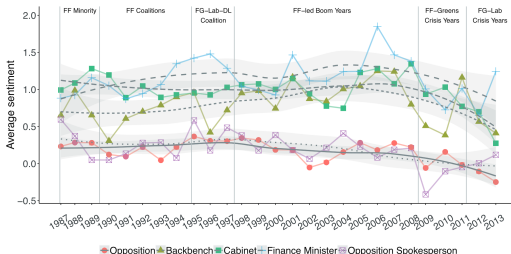
- **To achieve price stability.**
- **To keep firm control over public spending.**
- **To continue to reduce taxes as fast as we prudently can.**
- **To make sure that market mechanisms and incentives are allowed to do their job.**

Party programme of the British Conservative Party 1992

...extract political claims

# What we can do with text analysis II

FIGURE 5  
 Sentiment Estimates in Irish Budget Debates, 1987–2013 [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]



...extract sentiment (Proksch et al. 2019)

## What we can do with text analysis III

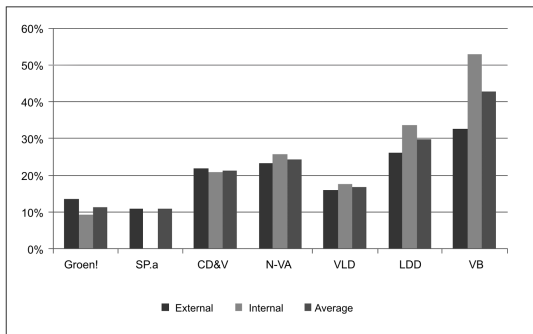
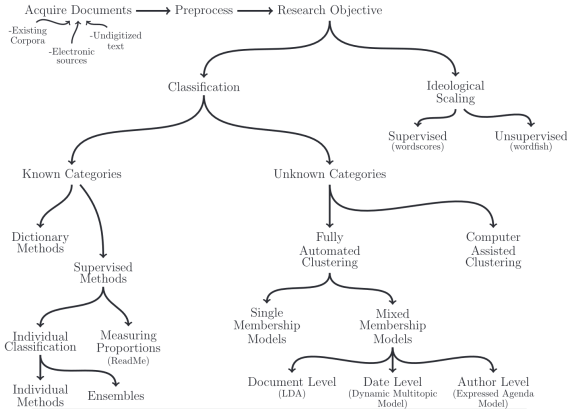


Figure 2. The degree of populist radical right values among Flemish parties.

...extract latent concepts (Pauwels 2011)



# Different forms of text analysis I





## Caveats

*"All Quantitative Models of Language Are Wrong—But Some Are Useful" (Grimmer and Stewart 2013)*

Models we use to make sense of text are always **incomplete** and **imperfect**. Like any other statistical models, they have measurement error (even GPT!)



## Bags-of-words II

The intuition behind bags-of-words approaches is that we can understand the **meaning** of a text from the **vocabulary** it uses. Comparisons between texts are based on the **frequency of terms** in a text.

# Bags-of-words III

Document D1	<i>The child makes the dog happy</i> the: 2, dog: 1, makes: 1, child: 1, happy: 1
Document D2	<i>The dog makes the child happy</i> the: 2, child: 1, makes: 1, dog: 1, happy: 1



	child	dog	happy	makes	the	<b>BoW Vector representations</b>
D1	1	1	1	1	2	<b>[1,1,1,1,2]</b>
D2	1	1	1	1	2	<b>[1,1,1,1,2]</b>

*Two documents with different meanings, yet same BoW representation*  
(Source: AIML.com Research)

## Bags-of-words IV

*What's the problem with this structure?*

## Bags-of-words V

What's the problem with this structure?

- order of words is discarded
- disregarding grammatical structure
- context-blind (word with different meanings is treated the same)



# Pipeline of bags-of-words

1. Data gathering
2. Data preparation
3. Data analysis
4. Validation

## Data preparation

Except for descriptive purposes, we do not use our raw text but need to transform it.

Three transformations

1. from data.frame to corpus object
2. from corpus to tokens
3. from tokens to document-frequency-matrix (also called document-term-matrix)

## A corpus

A **corpus** object recognizes each row of an input vector as a document.

```

1 > corp <- corpus(df$sentence)
2 > head(corp,2)
3 Corpus consisting of 2 documents.
4 text1 :
5 "Peter Costello, Chris McDiven, my parliamentary
   colleagues a..."
6
7 text2 :
8 "This campaign, more than any other that I have been
   involved..."
  
```

## A corpus II

- Usually, just the first transformation step.
- first glimpse into data with `summary(corpus_object)`
- also used for some statistics like the readability score `textstat_readability(corpus_object)`
- ...more on corpus objects

## A tokens object

Splits the text into tokens which can be sentences, words, characters, and returns a matrix in the following form

```

1 > toks <- tokens(corp, what="word")
2 >
3 > head(toks[[1]], 20)
4 [1] "Peter"           "Costello"       ", "
      "Chris"         "McDiven"       ", "           "my"
      "parliamentary"
5 [9] "colleagues"     "and"            "my"
      "fellow"        "Australians"   "."
  
```

## A tokens object I

- tokens objects allow many pre-processing steps such as  
`remove_punct=T`, `remove_numbers=T`,  
`remove_symbols=T`, `remove_url=T`
- with `tokens_remove(stopwords())`, we can further  
 remove stopwords of an object (like "and", "the", "a", "in")
- `kwic(token_object, "word", window=n)` shows  
 which terms surround a word
- there are different tokenizers, a more powerful alternative to  
 quanteda is `library(spacyR)` which lemmatizes words  
 and recognizes type of word (noun, verb, name, etc.)
- [...more on token objects](#)

## A document-frequency-matrix

A matrix with each row representing a document, and each column a text. Each cell shows how often a term has been used in a text

```

1 > m_dfm <- dfm(toks, tolower = T)
2 >
3 > m_dfm
4 Document-feature matrix of: 187,689 documents, 44,409
  features (99.96% sparse) and 0 docvars.
5 features
6 docs      peter costello ,      chris      mcdiven
7 text1      1          1      2          1          1
8 text2      0          0      2          0          0
9 [ reached max_ndoc ... 187,683 more documents, reached
  max_nfeat ... 44,399 more features ]
  
```

## A document-frequency-matrix I

DFM are the object type which we will use for most of our analyses today

- with `docvars(dfm, "name") <- df$name`, we can add meta information (e.g. about communicator, time, topic)
- several functions to do text pre-processing operations
  - `dfm_keep`, `dfm_remove`, `dfm_subset`, `dfm_trim` and `dfm_replace` allows to drop or change features (terms) of the matrix
  - `dfm_lookup` allows to apply a dictionary to `dfm`
  - `dfm_group` groups `dfm` by a group defined in `docvars()`
  - `dfm_tfidf` weights each token by term-frequency inverse-document-frequency matrix
  - `dfm_sample` takes a random sample of documents (often used for training/test splits in classification tasks)



## A document-frequency-matrix II

- `dfm_match` compares features of `dfm` with another `dfm` and creates same structure
- ...more on `dfm` objects

## Pre-processing I

Pre-processing depends on the specific application, in bags-of-words applications, we are usually quite generous in pruning our feature space.

Often, we can get rid off:

- **punctuation**
- **digits** (unless there are specific numbers to make sense of our texts)
- **urls**
- particularly when using social media data, **symbols** (hashtags, emojis)
- stopwords: there are lists of **stopwords** in different languages by `quanteda`; we may need to add some more words to these lists and sometimes, we need to remove some words from it

*Let's do it in  $\mathbb{R}$*

## Descriptive statistics and visualization I

After we did all these pre-processing steps, we can visualize our data like that:

Words that are associated with "left"

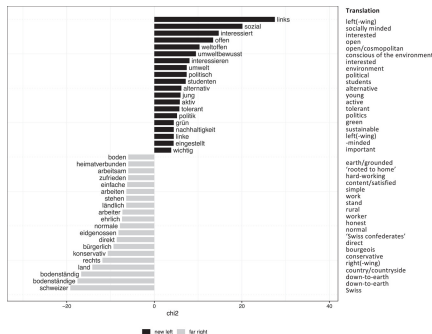


Words that are associated with "right"

Bauer et al. (2017); in `quanteda`:  
`textplot_wordcloud(dfm)`

## Descriptive statistics and visualization II

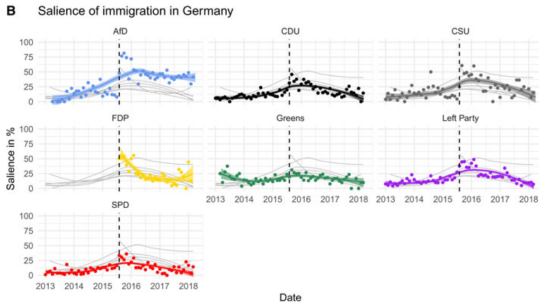
We can also calculate some statistics like keyness (based on  $\chi^2$ ), which terms are more often used by specific communicators?



Zollinger (2024); in quanteda: `textstat_keyness()` and `textplot_keyness()`

## Descriptive statistics and visualization III

A very common and despite its simplicity valuable task is a dictionary analysis



Gessler and Hunger (2022); in `quanteda`: `dfm_lookup(dfm, dict)`

*Let's do it in  $\mathbb{R}$*

## Unsupervised methods

- sometimes, we want to categorize text but do not know the categories a priori
- in this circumstances, we use unsupervised methods which are “a class of methods that learn underlying features of text without explicitly imposing categories of interest” (Grimmer and Stewart 2013, p. 281)
- we'll use them mainly for clustering



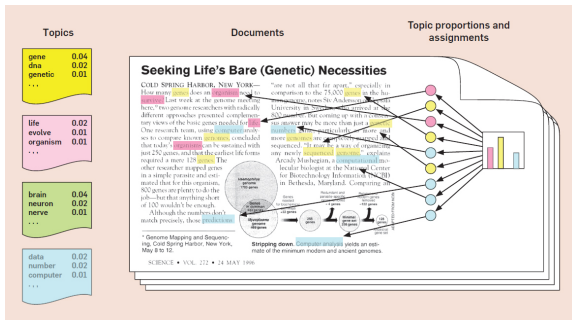
## Topic models

- topic models are one form of **clustering**
- compared to single-membership models (clustered into distinct categories), topic models are **mixed-membership models** based on the assumption that each text uses vocabulary of different topics
- data requirement: large corpora of texts, pre-processed as described

## General idea of topic models I

- documents consists of words whose combination represents a **hidden (latent) semantic meaning**
- idea: author of a text writes a text on topic  $k$  using those terms that are associated with it
- depending on the composition of words,each document has a **probability  $p$  of belonging to topic  $k$**
- core techniques are **Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA)** and **Latent Dirichlet Allocation**

# General idea of topic models II



Blei, D. M. (2012). Probabilistic topic models. *Communications of the ACM*, 55(4), 77–84.

<https://doi.org/10.1145/2133806.2133826>

## General idea of topic models III

- **LDA** is a probabilistic model in which each term  $t$  has a certain probability of belonging to topic  $k$ , and each document  $d$  is composed of multiple  $k$ 
    - mainly used for topic modelling
    - generative model in which topics are first randomly assigned to documents; each word has a probability of belonging to topic  $k$
    - iterative process in which log likelihood is reduced (the smaller the better)
    - number of  $k$  needs to be defined a priori (no strict guidelines, generally: the larger the corpus, the more topics it includes)
- ...more on LDA (Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003)

# Topic models in R I

There are different packages available to estimate a topic model, such as `lda` and `stm`.

## Structured topic model

- in its basic application, the **structured topic models** (`stm`) resembles a Latent Dirichlet Allocation
- we can however add meta information to the topic model to improve its predictive power
  1. topic **prevalence**: covariates that influence the frequency of a topic (like seasonal effects)
  2. topic **content**: covariates that influence how a topic is discussed (e.g., by different parties)

## Topic models in R II

- stm also allows to specify  $k = 0$  whereby  $k$  is determined automatically (using a different distribution, `init.type="Spectral"` instead of LDA); *be aware*: that does not mean that  $\hat{k}$  is the true  $k$

# Topic models in R III

## Steps in R

1. **Preparation** (as done before: from data frame to corpus, to tokens, to data-frequency-matrix)
2. **Estimation** of topic model
3. **Interpretation**
4. **Validation**

## Estimation and Interpretation

Main choice:  $K \rightarrow$  number of topics

```
1 stm1 <- stm(m_dfm, K = 20, seed=421)
2 labelTopics(stm1)
3 Topic 1 Top Words:
4 Highest Prob: national, policy, change, climate,
   policies, government, strategy
5 FREX: positive, policy, equality, immigration,
   priority, common, population
6 Lift: highlights, positive, anti-nuclear, nps,
   2010-2020, formulation, internationalism
7 Score: policy, positive, climate, change,
   environmental, policies, national
8 Topic 2 Top Words:
9 Highest Prob: new, zealand, industry, water,
   environment, food, sustainable
```



*Let's do it in  $\mathbb{R}$*

# Validation

Validation can be based on

1. **technical** parameters
2. **manual** coding

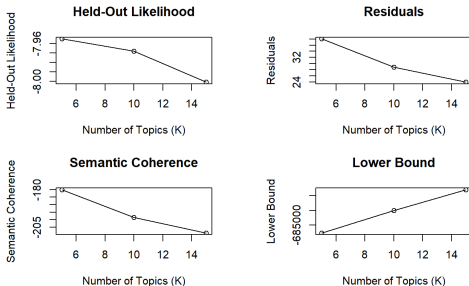
## Technical validation

We can use `stm`'s `searchK()` function to determine the best number of topics  $k$  based on likelihood, lower bound, residuals and semantic coherence.

```
1 # convert dfm to stm
2 m_stm_sub <- convert(m_dfm_sub,"stm")
3
4 # create vector with different numbers for k (here, 5,
   # 10 and 15)
5 K<- c(5,10,15)
6
7 # run validation
8 best_k <- searchK(m_stm_sub$documents, m_stm_sub$vocab,
   # K)
```

# Technical validation

Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics



## Advancing topic models

- available using R package `topicmodels`
- correlated topic models: allow for correlation between latent topics; in R, run `CTM` (see [for application](#) and Blei and Lafferty (2005) for methodological background)
- seeded topic models: semi-supervised approach, topic model is fed with pre-specified keywords; in R, run `textmodel_seededlda` (see [for application](#) and Watanabe (2021) and Watanabe and Baturu (2024) for methodological background)

# Scaling I

Sometimes, we have a clearly defined topic (e.g., the economy) and want to assess where actors stand on this topic

- early approach: **Wordfish** (Slapin and Proksch 2008)
  - calculates a weight for each word (in its initial application: how much does it distinguish parties)
  - provides a **position** of a party on a unidimensional scale
  - usually on a more aggregated level
- more recent approach: **Latent Semantic Scaling** (Watanabe 2021)
  - LSS “creates a polarity score of words depending on a certain number of seed words” (Watanabe 2021)

## Scaling II

- it's semi-supervised, we use our domain-specific knowledge to actually determine the poles of our unidimensional space
- on the sentence level

## Wordfish in R

```
1 > m_wordfish <- textmodel_wordfish(m_dfm2)
2 > summary(m_wordfish)
3
4 Call:
5 textmodel_wordfish.dfm(x = m_dfm2)
6
7 Estimated Document Positions:
8     theta      se
9 2001.1 -0.9434 0.02570
10 [...]
```



# Latent Semantic Scaling in R

1. define polarisation terms
2. estimate LSS model

```
1 lr_dict <- dictionary(list(left = c("unemployment",  
  "justice", "wage", "employee", "bargaining"),  
2 right = c("budget", "merit", "deficit", "business",  
  "growth")))  
3 seed <- as.seedwords(lr_dict)
```

## Latent Semantic Scaling in R

```
1 lss_model <- textmodel_lss(m_dfm2, seeds = seed,  
2 k = 300, auto_weight = T)
```

→  $k$  is the number of singular values (dimensionality reduction);  
auto-weight adjusts the weights to tokens' similarity to seed words

*Let's do it in  $\mathbb{R}$*

# Supervised methods

For supervised tasks, we have information at hand to make inference about new cases.

## Two types of supervised tasks

1. **Regression** is used for making predictions of continuous outcome variables
2. **Classification** is used for classifying data into  $n$  categories (categorical outcome variable)

[More on supervised methods](#)



## Basics concepts I

- **gold standard:** to train our models, we need annotated data, the gold standard of it being hand-coded data; the more data, the better the prediction (especially for complex latent concepts)
- **machine learning:** prediction tasks involve machine learning; it's an iterative process which assigns a weight to terms to reduce the error ([for an introduction to machine learning](#))
- **training/test data:** to validate whether we are right or wrong, we need to leave out some data for testing purposes
- **inference:** the whole purpose of these tasks is to predict unlabelled examples

## Basics concepts II

- **classification algorithm:** model used to classify our data (binary, multiclass, multilabel)
- **performance metrics:** accuracy, F1-score, true/false positive rates used to evaluate how good a model performs

# Classification algorithms I

## Naive Bayes

- family of classifiers that are based on Bayes' Theorem
- probability is assessed by the occurrence of an event
- e.g., how likely is it that someone speaks about migration if they use the features 'Refugees', 'are', 'welcome', 'here', '.'
- assumes feature independence (treats every feature independently) → in the example above, the term 'refugees' has nothing to do with 'welcome'
- each feature is assigned the same weight → 'here' is equally important as 'Refugees'



# Classification algorithms II

	Outlook	Temperature	Humidity	Windy	Play Golf
0	Rainy	Hot	High	False	No
1	Rainy	Hot	High	True	No
2	Overcast	Hot	High	False	Yes
3	Sunny	Mild	High	False	Yes

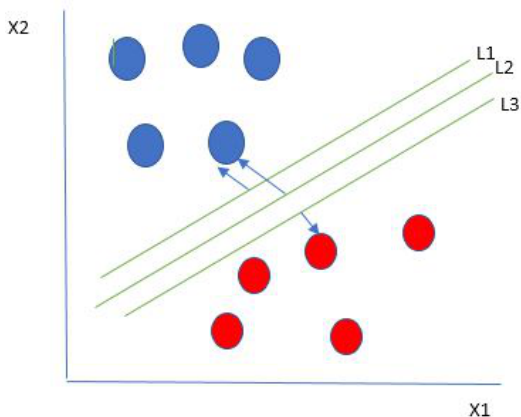
## Graph and intuition

## Classification algorithms III

### Support vector machines

- general idea: draw a hyperplane (decision boundary) that separates our data best
- support vectors are those cases which are closest to the hyperplane
- we want to maximize the distance between empirical cases of our classes

# Classification algorithms IV



## Graph and intuition

# Data

Our annotated data should consist of at least two columns

1. **feature**: one or more input vector(s) (like words in a text)
2. **label**: a variable indicating the category of the feature

Think of it in regression terms, the label is  $y$  and the feature  $x$ ; we are trying to explain  $y$  by  $x_N$

# Classification in R

- today: `quanteda.textmodels`
- on Monday: `keras` for deep learning

## Preparation

Assuming that we have a dfm with labels as docvars, we have to split our dfm into training and test data (ratio depends on you, but often 80/20 is chosen).

Since we sample documents, we need to remove those features (words) that are not present anymore from our dfm.

```
1 > train <- dfm_sample(m_dfm_sub, 0.8*nrow(df_sub))
2 > test <- dfm_subset(m_dfm_sub,
3 +   !(docnames(m_dfm_sub) %in% docnames(train)))
4 > train <- train %>% dfm_trim(1)
5 > test <- dfm_match(test, featnames(train))
```

## Model estimation

After this, we can already use an algorithm to train with our training data.

```
1 > nb_model<-textmodel_nb(train,docvars(train, "label"))
2 > nb_model
3
4 Call:
5 textmodel_nb.dfm(x = train, y = docvars(train, "label"))
6
7 Distribution: multinomial ; priors: 0.5 0.5 ; smoothing
   value: 1 ; 18796 training documents; fitted
   features.
```

## Model inference

Given that we have set the weights of our model, we can use it for inference (here on our test data to evaluate its performance but potentially also on out-of-sample data)

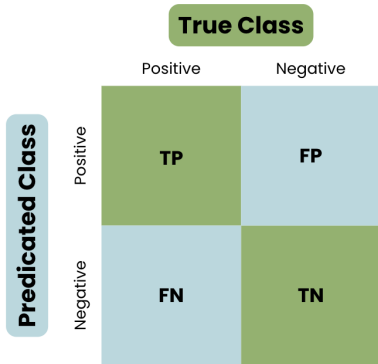
```
1 > test_predictions<-predict(nb_model, newdata=test)
```



*Let's do it in  $\mathbb{R}$*

# Evaluation I

As we have annotated data already, evaluation is easier than with unsupervised techniques. There are different metrics we can consider:



# Evaluation II

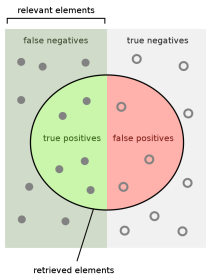
## Accuracy

$$\frac{TP + TN}{N} \quad (1)$$

How many cases did we predict correctly?

# Evaluation III

## Precision and Recall



How many retrieved items are relevant?

$$\text{Precision} = \frac{\text{true positives}}{\text{true positives} + \text{false positives}}$$

How many relevant items are retrieved?

$$\text{Recall} = \frac{\text{true positives}}{\text{true positives} + \text{false negatives}}$$







**Thank you for your attention!**



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