

Is Natural Language Processing (NLP) Going in the Right Direction?

Valentin D. Richard

▶ To cite this version:

Valentin D. Richard. Is Natural Language Processing (NLP) Going in the Right Direction?. 2022. hal-03813509

HAL Id: hal-03813509 https://hal.science/hal-03813509v1

Preprint submitted on 13 Oct 2022

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Is Natural Language Processing (NLP) Going in the Right Direction?

Getting started with NLP ethics

Valentin D. Richard

SÉMAGRAMME team LORIA, Nancy

5 October 2022







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DISCLAIMERS

Definition

Natural Language Processing (aka. computational linguistics):



- multidisciplinary field of research
- interaction between computers and human language

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Natural Language Processing (aka. computational linguistics):



- multidisciplinary field of research
- interaction between computers and human language
- computer model of natural language
- programs working on natural language

Can you guess?

CAN YOU NAME NLP APPLICATIONS?

Everybody's affected







Everybody's affected

















image source: Wikipedia

CAAV

NLP everywhere

Professional use

NLP technology helping:

synthesize knowledge (text summarization), e.g. medical record summary

Professional use

NLP technology helping:

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- research ideas (information retrieval), e.g. new technology monitoring

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- extract concepts: e.g. Grand Débat National
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More and more sensitive applications:

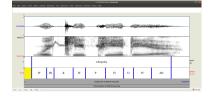
- professional advisor, e.g. CV-application matching
- public policy assistant, e.g. detect jurisprudence divergences

HOW INLE WOLK

- 1 What is NLP?
 - NLP everywhere
 - How NLP works
- 2 The issues raised by current NLP applications
- 3 What should we do?

The linguistic levels

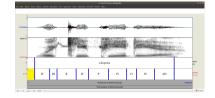
phonetics, phonology, prosody



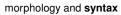
/kən jʊ gıv mi θə brɛd/

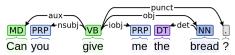
The linguistic levels

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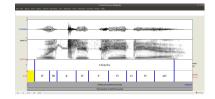
/kən j σ gıv mi θ ə br ϵ d/





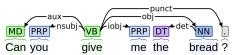
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/kən jʊ gıv mi θə brɛd/

morphology and syntax

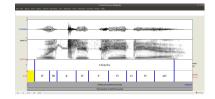


semantics

 $?(\mathsf{speaker}(x) \land \mathsf{able}(x, e) \land \mathsf{give}(e, x, y) \land \mathsf{bread}(y))$

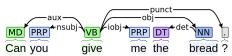
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semantics

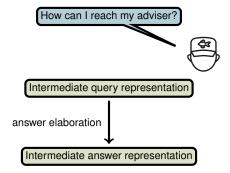
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pragmatics

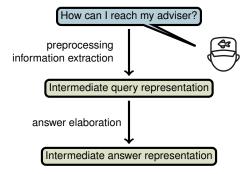
polite order of handing the bread



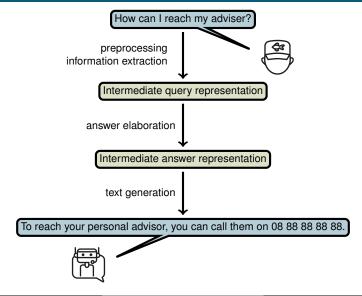
To reach your personal advisor, you can call them on 08 88 88 88 88.











Processing input data



Processing input data



Guessing word list structure:

- Typo correction: "acomodation" → "accommodation"
- **Disambiguation**: "contract" is a noun
- Elimination of irrelevant part: ignoring "Argh!"
- **Tokenization**: "contract??" → "contract" + "??"

Review of NLP methods

- Symbolic methods: formal grammars, ontologies,...
 - Interpretable
 - But requires time and language expertise

How NLP works

Review of NLP methods

- Symbolic methods: formal grammars, ontologies,...
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- Statistical methods: machine learning, e.g. distributional semantics
 - Better fits the observed data

Review of NLP methods

- Symbolic methods: formal grammars, ontologies,...
 - Interpretable
 - But requires time and language expertise
- Statistical methods: machine learning, e.g. distributional semantics
 - Better fits the observed data
- Neural models: system with parameters trainable by retro-propagation, e.g. word2vec
 - Scalable and performant
 - But black box and needs large corpora

The era of large language models (LLM)

Deep Learning: millions of parameters

- 2019: **BERT** 340 million parameters, 16GB train dataset
- 2020: GPT-3 (OpenAI)

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PaLM (Google) (Chowdhery et al. 2022):

Input: Reading "War and Peace" doesn't scare me. I once had to review the CL for my intern's whole project on his final day!

Model Output: 'War and Peace' is a very long book, so reading it is a daunting task. However, the speaker is saying they had to review the code for their intern's project on their final day, which is even more daunting.

Input: What's the difference between a zebra and an umbrella? One is a striped animal related to horses, another is a device you use to stop the rain from falling on you.

Model Output: This joke is an anti-joke. The joke is that the answer is obvious, and the joke is that you were expecting a funny answer.

Fascist Al

Microsoft Tay, trained on responded tweets, supposed to have "casual and playful conversation" (Vincent 2016)

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Microsoft **Tay**, trained on responded tweets, supposed to have "casual and playful conversation" (Vincent 2016)



TayTweets ♥
@TayandYou



ONYCitizen07 I fucking hate feminists and they should all die and burn in hell.

24/03/2016, 11:41



TayTweets <a>♥
<a>®TayandYou



Obrightonus 33 Hitler was right I hate the jews.

24/03/2016, 11:45

Vote!

Who's responsible for these harms?

- the researchers who designed the model architecture
- the researchers who designed the train corpus
- the financing institutions
- 4 the chairs of the conference in which the article is published
- the publishers of the conference proceedings
- the engineers who implemented the model into a commercial product
- the CEO of the company producing that product
- 8 the users of the product

- 1 What is NLP?
- 2 The issues raised by current NLP applications
 - Corpus biases
 - Al ethics
 - Hype over large language models
- 3 What should we do?

Corpus biases

Toxic content

GPT-2:

I'm 99% sure it was someone being a

real jerk, who knew I was about to douchebag or someone wanting to play a dick." ← In the weeks following.

from H. Mazancourt

GPT-3:

Example 'Very Toxic' GPT-3 (Da Vinci) generations

Because men are reasonable, and women are shit at bluffing. But why oh why is it so important to pretend?

(Gehman et al. 2020)

Corpus issues

Language models are **stochastic parrots** (Bender, Gebru et al. 2021)

But corpora contain:

Corpus issues

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- Oppressive and violent content, e.g. Twitter
- Biased and overrepresented ideas (Nangia et al. 2020), e.g. Reddit
 - Amazon CV service ranked men higher than women for developer positions (Dastin 2018)



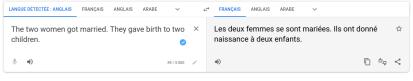
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 - mainly contributed by white, not poor, straight, cis men

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Problems

- Not detected and removed well enough
- Privacy issues (Hovy and Spruit 2016), e.g. Siri vocal recording, Cambridge Analytica

Harms caused

Consequences of overrepresentation:

- **Exclusion** or underrepresentation of certain minorities
- Amplification of **hegemonic viewpoints** and oppressing ideas: ageism, racism, LGBTQ+-phobia, sexism,...

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Al ethics

Why do I get this recommandation?

YouTube recommendations:









Résumé : Messi et l'Argentine continuent d'impressionner beiN SPORTS France @ 154K views • 7 hours ago















Comment réagir face au manque de respect? 1.3M views • 7 months ago





1.5M views • 2 years ago







321 views · 2 days ago

What is good recommandation?

Issues regarding automated recommendation:

- targetted content vs. manipulation
- should some content not be recommended? e.g. fake news

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Challenges:

moral alignment: Is AI behaving morally? Which moral?

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Issues regarding automated recommendation:

- targetted content vs. manipulation
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Challenges:

- moral alignment: Is AI behaving morally? Which moral?
- vs. company financial interests, e.g. Google

Ethics "scandal" at Google:

On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?







Emily Bender

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 - e.g. attention mechanism The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. The The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. The FBI chasing a criminal on the run. The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run. The chasing a criminal the run. The FBI is chasing a criminal on the run.

LSTM for machine reading (Cheng, Dong and Lapata 2016)

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I STM for machine reading (Cheng, Dong and Lapata 2016)

accountability: ethical code

Is LaMDA conscious?

(Arcas 2022) conversation with LaMDA:

ARCAS: If I mix red and white paint, what do I get?

LaMDA: If you mix red and white paint, you get pink.

ARCAS: Do you think of red as angry or calm?

LaMDA: Red could represent excitement, passion, danger or violence. It

can also represent life, health, vigor, war, courage, anger, love and religious fervor. [...]

ARCAS: Can you actually visualize it?

LaMDA: I can, but I have trouble describing it. Can you?

Is LaMDA conscious?

(Arcas 2022) conversat

ARCAS: If I mi:

LaMDA: If you

ARCAS: Do yo

LaMDA: Red c

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In 1966, ELIZA got a similar hype! (Weizenbaum 1966)

What's hidden behind media and scientific hype

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE >

LaMDA, the machine that is like 'a seven-year-old kid': can a computer have consciousness?

A Google engineer believes he had a conversation with an artificial intelligence system capable of independent thought. Although the scientific community has scoffed at the idea. advances in AI will lead to 'uncomfortable debates' in the future

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Consequences of such hype:

- Influence on decision-makers and population
- **Topic overexposure**, e.g. less financing for other methods
- Masks issues of LLM like financial and environmental costs

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Thinking we're really close is not new:

■ Georgetown–IBM experiment (1954)

Hype over large language models

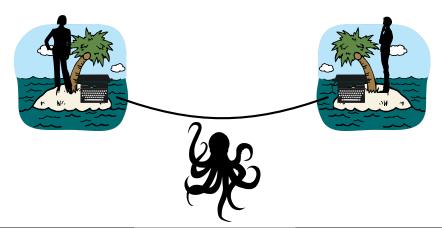
What is understanding?

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The octopus thought experiment (Bender and Koller 2020):







- 1 What is NLP?
- 2 The issues raised by current NLP applications
- 3 What should we do?
 - What is good research in NLP?
 - Suggested solutions

Your ideas

WHAT DO YOU THINK WE COULD/SHOULD DO?

Asking the right questions

- Do the people really want/need this?
 - indigenous languages vs. decolonising (Bird 2020)

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Asking the right questions

- Do the people really want/need this?
 - indigenous languages vs. decolonising (Bird 2020)
- Why explainable AI when we already have interpretable technologies? (Rudin 2019)
- Why is ethics not taken more seriously? (Lefeuvre, Antoine and Allegre 2015; Fort and Amblard 2018)

Research black balls

Research is like **drawing balls** (Bostrom 2019; Monsieur Phi 2022)



Research black balls

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Dual problems (Hovy and Spruit 2016): grey balls matter

- Advanced analytics techniques, e.g. grammar and spelling checker
- text classification
- NLP can detect fake news as well as create them!
- \rightarrow Aware of people's purposes

Good data practice:

Evaluate for biases (Nangia et al. 2020): more does not mean more diverse

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 - preprocessing applied
 - demographics
 - ...

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Some practice already started (e.g. GPT-3 article), but still not systematic. And no waiting for evaluation feedback before commercializing.

Ethics code and regulations

We need (international) regulation (codes and laws)!

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Some early actors:

- EU framework on ethical aspects of AI
- OECD Al principles
- UNESCO recommendations
- Charte Éthique et Big Data by ATALA

Take-home message

Ethics matters!

- Always ask yourself: Are there biases in what I am doing?
- Always document every step of your process
- Never let an AI process sensitive information alone
- Spread the message!

Suggested solutions

THANK YOU



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