Linguistic Analysis of Emotions in Online News Comments - an Example of the Eurovision Song Contest

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Aim of the study

- linguistic differences between positive and negative comments
- news about the Eurovision song contest
Motivation

- Emotions in language
- Emotions in online comments
- Emotions within the Eurovision song contest
- Strong connection between the emotions and their social manifestations (Mygovych, 2013)
- Opinion expression independently of the official media content
- Evocation of polarised emotions
Analysed material

- 70 comments from the Janes corpus v0.4 (Fišer et al., 2016)
  - source: national television and radio online news portal RTV Slovenija
  - topic: the Slovenian representative in the finals of the Eurovision song contest
Methodology

- sentiment category (positive, negative)
- syntax
  - sentence type (statement, exclamation, question, order)
  - sentence structure (simple, complex)
- vocabulary characteristics
- orthography (formal, informal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO: Držim pesti!</th>
<th>ENG: Fingers crossed!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence form</td>
<td>exclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthography</td>
<td>standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Negative comments: statements (86%)

*Ne, ne bo. / No, it won’t.*

Positive comments: similar share of statements (48%) and exclamations (45%)

*Srečno! / Good luck!*
Negative comments: the majority of the sentences are complex (62%)

According to our media, despite positive reviews, our songs were unsuccessful almost every year, and this year it won’t be any different.

Positive comments: nearly half of the sentences (49%) are simple

I have a good feeling about this.
Negative comments: mostly opinionated (70%)
*davkopalčevalci* (*taxpayers*), *kuhna* (*inside deal*), *lajna* (*broken record*)

Positive comments: not topic-specific, usually express general support
*Srečno!* (*Good luck!*), *upam* (*I hope*), *podpiramo* (*we support*).
Orthography

Negative comments: mostly standard orthography (78%)
Positive comments: informal features (42%)
pronunciation-based orthography (e.g. dejmo instead of dajmo), all-caps (e.g. SHE WILL), non-standard punctuation (e.g. Dajmo klobasica!!!:) / Do it sausage !!!:), and emoticons (:;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive comments</th>
<th>Negative comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exclamations, Simple syntax</td>
<td>Statements, Complex syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good luck!</td>
<td><em>As far as I heard, she did not fare well last night.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General vocabulary</td>
<td><strong>Topic specific vocabulary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I hope, we support</em></td>
<td>taxpayers, inside deal, broken record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal orthography</td>
<td><strong>Standard orthography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHE WIIILLL!!!;</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The critical function of the negative comments:

– argumentation, not affect
– position of a reflective individual
Further work

- wider range of highly opinionated topics
  - sports, politics, religion, product & service reviews
- fine-grained set of sentiments
  - support, cynicism, optimism, pessimism
Any comments are welcome ...

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