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## Sentiment Analysis Applied to Airline Feedback to Boost Customer's Endearment

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### Abstract

Customers differ greatly in terms of their demographics, lifestyles, needs, perceptions, preferences and behaviours. A business entity needs to understand the profitability of each individual customer in a segment as well as their potential lifetime profitability. In this paper our focus is on the application of sentiment analysis to analyze feedback of passengers obtained from airline forum. For this purpose Multinomial Naive Bayes and Linear Support Vector models are used. Training data consists of 1217 positive reviews and 955 negative reviews. Sentiments were predicted for 868 reviews. This work also aims at finding suitable data model that achieve a high accuracy and the dependence of accuracy on various pre-processing approaches. The result of sentiment analysis is plotted as a bar graph visualization and evaluated against overall trip rating obtained from forum. By this work we would like to help the airline industry to maximize the delivery and service to meet the customer expectation and build customer loyalty.

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### Introduction

The Web contains rich source of sentiments/opinions in the form of movie review, product review, social discussions, trip review, etc. These data are gold mines for business analyst in taking decisions. The prime difference between computer and human is that the latter can perceive emotions while the former cannot. If it is made possible for computers to computationally understand sentiments/opinions, then it can be used to provide information about the likes and dislikes of users.

The airline industry is a billion dollar industry and millions of passengers use this transportation service daily for transportation from one place to another. Due to the increasing competition, a lot of start-up as well as established airline companies are finding it difficult to survive in the current market. Building customer loyalty is posing a great challenge these days and is also the major concern among companies. For all these reasons, it is vital to provide good service, value feedback of passengers and satisfy the passenger's

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needs. In the past passenger reviews were manually read, analyzed and categorized which demanded a lot of effort, labour and time.

Sentiment analysis of text is the employment of natural language processing and computational linguistics methods to classify the polarity of text at the document, sentence and aspect level. Typically, two main approaches are used for sentiment analysis of text. First being the lexical analysis approach, where dictionaries are built. The second approach being the machine learning approach where feature vectors are built.

The study by Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan (2002) classifies movie reviews as positive or negative using supervised classification techniques and compares the sentiment classification with the traditional topic level detection. The study by Yessenov and Misailovic (2009) examines sentiment analysis of tweets and uses pos-specific prior polarity features and partial tree kernel features for sentiment classification. The study by Agarwal et al. (2011) classifies movie reviews by subjectivity/objectivity and negative/positive attitude using machine learning techniques - Naive Bayes, Decision Tree, Maximum Entropy, K-Means Clustering. The study by Adeborna and Siau (2014) focuses on using sentiment mining approach to detect sentiment polarity and sentiment topic detection from airline tweets.

Minimal research has been made on the sentiment analysis of airline review provided by passengers. Existing works have used reviews obtained from twitter where character limit is 140 hindering individual passenger to convey his/her entire experience. Also, abbreviations are commonly used in tweets making it difficult to perform sentiment analysis. In our work, we develop a sentiment analysis engine that uses different pre-processing strategies and machine learning approach to determine the polarity of passenger's review. The main contribution of our work can be summarized as below:

- a) The approach uses passenger's review collected from popular airline forum rather than from twitter.
- b) Developed pre-processing strategy to handle removal of country names, date, baggage weight and flight identification numbers using regular expression. Study relating variation of accuracy, number of features and pre-processing approach are made.
- c) Representation of tokens as sparse matrix and pipelining are applied to boost the performance of the system.
- d) Performance of machine learning algorithms through metrics such as accuracy, recall, f1-score and precision are made. Also, runtime analysis of the algorithms are studied.
- e) Graphical representation of sentimentally analyzed data is plotted as bar graph and evaluated with overall rating.

The classifier was trained using 1217 positive reviews and 955 negative reviews. The trained classifier was made to predict the polarity for 868 reviews. The comparison of the two classifier method show that Linear Support Vector outperforms that of Multinomial Naive Bayes. It was also observed that accuracy improved upon applying various pre-processing techniques.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 provides the literature survey of existing works. System architecture and system design are discussed in section 3 and 4 respectively. Section 5 provides an insight on performance analysis of the developed system. Section 6 discusses about experiments and results of the machine learning algorithms. Conclusion and future work are discussed in section 7 and 8 respectively.

## Literature Survey

### *An Approach To Sentiment Analysis – The Case Of Airline Quality*

*Rating.* This research paper classifies the airline tweets as positive, negative opinion or emotion. This research paper also performs Sentiment Topic Recognition to examine the reputation of airline by calculating Airline Quality Rating based on customer sentiment analysis (Adeborna & Siau, 2014). Airline Quality Rating is evaluated based on four criteria – On-Time, Denied Boarding, Mishandled Baggage and Customer Complaint. For Sentiment Detection, the tweets are subjected to preprocessing before classification. The pre-processing include removing retweets, html entries, markups, punctuation, numbers, @, people and unnecessary spaces. The tweets are classified using Naive Bayes algorithm to predict whether the tweet is positive or negative. Sentiment Topic Recognition of tweets is performed. Sentiment Topic Recognition identifies the representative topic for each sentiment. Sentiment Topic Recognition uses Correlated Topics Models (CTM) with Variational Expectation-Maximization (VEM) algorithm which extracts terms from the airline tweets to build lexicon for the Airline Quality Rating category. This model categorizes the topic related terms into positive or negative for each Airline Quality Rating category.

#### *Sentiment Analysis Of Movie Review Comments*

Sentiment Analysis of Movie Review Comments classifies the movie review comments obtained from social networking site 'Diggs' into positive/negative/neutral and subjective/objective with the help of machine learning techniques (Agarwal et al., 2011). In order to perform machine learning, features are extracted from the comments. Feature vectors are represented by  $\vec{F} = (f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n)$ . Each coordinate of a feature vector are represented by a clue,  $f_i$  of the text. The presence or absence of a feature are represented by a binary value or integer value. In bag-of-words model, frequency of words in the documents are noted and some words which occur frequently above a threshold are also noted. Infrequent words are eliminated. Then, the synonymous words are clustered. In order to handle negation chunking is used. Classification of comments involves supervised and unsupervised learning techniques. Supervised learning techniques use four machine learning techniques - Naive Bayes, Maximum Entropy and Decision Tree classifier. Unsupervised approach include K-Means Clustering. Naive Bayes algorithm is the best classification algorithm with the application of negation handling and bag-of-words. K-Means clustering performs well in subjectivity analysis.

#### *Sentiment Analysis Of Twitter Data*

Sentiment Analysis of Twitter Data involves classifying the tweets into three categories - positive, negative and neutral or junk (Yessenov & Misailovic, 2009). The "junk label" means that the tweet cannot be understood by a human annotator. Pre-processing steps include replacing all the emoticons with their sentiment polarity by looking up the emoticon dictionary, replacing all URLs with a tag, replacing all set of negation characters with "not" and replacing repeated characters with a set of three characters. Then other pre-processing techniques like tokenizing, removing stop words and removing punctuation marks are also performed. Tweets are converted into Partial Tree Kernel. Partial Tree depicts the tweet features in a tree data structure. Similarities between the features are estimated by finding the correlation between the subtrees of kernels. The classification of tweets follows five models -

Unigram model, Tree Kernel model, 100 Senti-features model, Unigram + Senti-features model and Kernel + Senti-features model. Support Vector classification is used for classifying tweets. It is found that Tree kernel model provides better accuracy than Unigram model and Senti-features model. Combination of Unigram and Senti-features model yields better accuracy than combination of Tree kernel and Senti-features model.

System Architecture

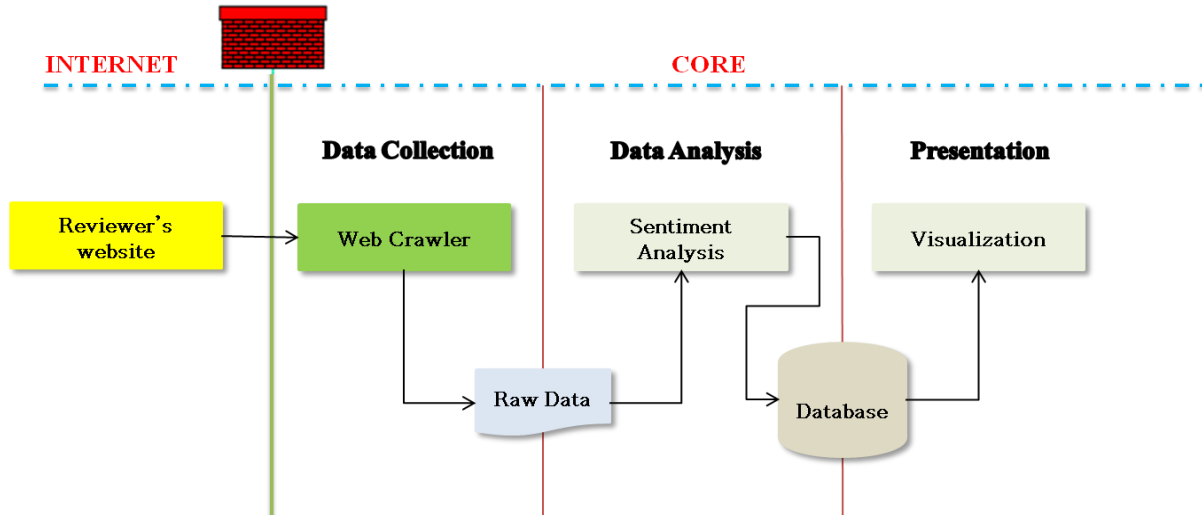


Figure 1(a): High level Architecture diagram

Figure 1(a) depicts the high level architecture diagram of sentiment analyzer system for analyzing passenger reviews. The system is divided into three phases. The first phase is the data collection phase, here the individual passengers review along with rating are scraped from collection of airline forum links. The second phase is the data analysis phase, here the review extracted are analyzed using machine learning techniques to obtain the sentiment. The third phase is the presentation phase and it involves plotting the rating and sentiment graphically.

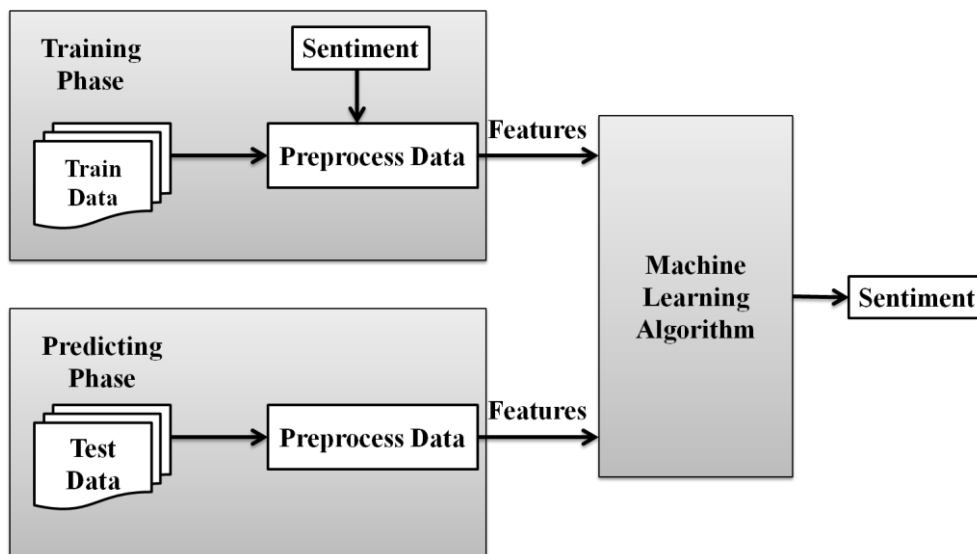


Figure 1(b): Architecture of Sentiment Analysis phase

Figure 1(b) depicts the block diagram of sentiment analysis phase shown in Figure 1(a). The sentiment analysis task is divided into two phases: training phase and predicting phase. The training phase involves loading train data (manually classified reviews) which is used to train the machine learning algorithm. The predicting phase involves loading test data (unclassified reviews) for which sentiment need to be determined. Both train and test data are pre-processed to obtain meaningful features before sentiment is obtained.

## System Design

### *Data Extraction*

The data extraction phase involves collecting data from airline forum (<http://www.airlinequality.com/>) and building text corpora of reviews for use in data analysis phase. The list of URL are given as input to the web scrapper which is used for extracting webpages. Extracted webpages are in HTML format and are parsed into textual format. Review and rating of 3040 passengers are extracted. Web scraper script was written in python.

### Data Analysis

#### *Pre-Processing*

The motivation behind pre-processing is to reduce the number of features in the classification of reviews and also to reduce the complexity of the sentimental classification. This will render a helping hand in improving throughput. There are various pre-processing strategies available. In this paper we concentrate on the following: Normalization, Lemmatization, Stemming, Stop Words Removal and Negation Handling.

#### *Normalization*

Normalization is the process of reducing the number of features which is required for classification. The training data and test data are word tokenized. For example 'This airlines is good' is tokenized to 'This ', ' airlines ', ' is ', ' good '. The words are tokenized for better pre-processing. The punctuation doesn't play any role in sentiment classification of airline reviews. So, the punctuation marks like '!', '?', '.' are removed.

#### *Stop Words Removal*

Stop words removal play an important role in reducing the length of documents in sentiment analysis. It is the process of filtering words which are of little help in processing the documents. Some words like articles, pronouns, etc., are prevalent in all the documents. These words don't determine the sentiment of a document. For example, words like 'the', 'a', 'these', etc., are of no use in sentiment analysis and hence it can be removed. Country names, date of travel, numerical value baggage weight, etc., are also removed in our work.

### *Lemmatization*

Lemmatization uses vocabulary and morphological analysis of word to remove inflectional endings, thereby returning words to their dictionary form (Balakrishnan & Lloyd-Yemoh, 2014). Lemmatization scans through the entire document and can be able to distinguish the meanings of the word according to the parts of speech. For instance the word 'new' and 'news' convey different meaning. WordNet is a lexical database of English words. Lemma or root word is a gateway to the WordNet (Bhattacharyya et al., 2014). The words which are conceptually same and can be used interchangeably are grouped into an unordered list. For example 'loved' and 'loves' are grouped together to a root word or a lexeme called 'love'. The lemmatizer will look up the WordNet and replace the word 'loved' by 'love' given that the parts of speech is a noun.

### *Stemming*

Stemming is the process of reducing grammatical, derivational and inflectional form of a word to their common base form called stem (Santhana Megala, Marimuthu, & Kavitha, 2013). It removes the suffix of a word. For example 'connection', 'connective', 'connectivity' are reduced to a common form called 'connect'. The most important distinguishing parameter between stemming and lemmatization is that stemming does not bother about interpreting the parts of speech of a word whereas lemmatization is concerned about analysing the parts of speech of a word by scanning through the full text. There are different stemming algorithms – Porter stemming, Lancaster Stemming, etc. We use Porter stemming algorithm for the purpose of stemming. Porter stemmer strips the suffixes in a word. It strips plurals and also deals with suffixes such as 'ed', 'y', 'ness', 'ation', etc.

### *Term Frequency And Inverse Document Frequency*

Term frequency and inverse document frequency are two distinct terms. 'Term frequency' is a measure of number of times each term appears in a document. It is computed by dividing number of times a word occurs in a document by the total number of documents. 'Inverse document frequency' scales down frequently occurring terms and scales up rarely occurring terms ("Inverse document frequency", n.d). It is the measure of the logarithm of the division of the number of documents by the number of documents containing term  $t$ . Tf-idf is the measure of product of term frequency and inverse document frequency.

If  $N_t$  is the number of times each term  $t$  in the document and  $D_n$  is the number of terms in documents  $n$  where  $n \in N$  where  $N$  is the total number of documents then term frequency

$$tf_t = \frac{N_t}{D_n}$$

If  $N$  is the total number of documents and  $M_t$  is the number of documents with term  $t$ , then inverse document frequency is

$$idf_t = \log\left(\frac{N}{M_t}\right)$$



Term frequency inverse document frequency is the product of term frequency and inverse document frequency and is given by

$$tfidf_t = tf_t \times idf_t$$

### Machine Learning Algorithms

In this work, we have used two supervised machine learning algorithms – Multinomial Naive Bayes and Linear Support Vector Machines. The machine learning algorithms are trained using 1217 positive and 955 negative reviews. 868 reviews were used as test data for classification.

### Linear Support Vector Machines

Linear Support Vector Machine is a supervised machine learning technique for sentiment analysis of documents. We use support vector machines to classify airline reviews collected from airline forum. Given a training set, Linear Support Vector machines finds a linear separation called hyperplane to separate the datasets. In our case, the linear decision boundary separates the datasets into class positive and negative. Let the class positive be represented as +1 and negative as -1. The hyperplane must be in such a way that the distance between the closest data points and the hyperplane must be maximum. The closest point to the hyperplane is called the margin. The points which are closest to the separating hyperplane are also known as support vectors. Generally a hyperplane is of the form  $w^T + b$  where  $w^T$  is a weight vector and b is the bias. The term  $w^T$  is the normal vector and it is a measure of orientation of the hyperplane and  $\frac{b}{\|w\|}$  is the displacement of the hyperplane from the origin. In order to find the points  $w^T$  and b, we must find the points with the smallest margin. So, we maximize the margin which can be written as

$$\arg \max_{w,b} \left\{ \min_n (\text{label} \cdot (w^T + b)) \cdot \frac{1}{\|w\|} \right\}$$

Where label  $\in \{+1, -1\}$ .

After finding the support vectors, it is important to classify the test data. Test data  $X_i$  is mapped to a function  $f(X_i) = w^T \cdot X_i + b$

If  $X_i$  is the test data and label which is represented by  $y_i \in \{+1, -1\}$ , then

$$f(X_i) \begin{cases} \geq 0 & y_i = +1 \\ < 0 & y_i = -1 \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

Equation (1) states that if  $f(X_i) \geq 0$ , then the class is positive and if  $f(X_i) < 0$ , then the class is negative.

### Multinomial Naive Bayes

In Multinomial Naive Bayes, a document  $d$  can be assumed to be collection of word features  $f_i$ . It is represented as  $d = \{f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n\}$ .  $f_i$  can be assumed to be the frequency of word  $w_i$  in a document  $d$ . Vocabulary is the dictionary of distinctive repository of words in the total collection of documents. Documents are represented as bag-of-words model because the frequency of words in a document are listed as a feature. The probability of class  $c$  given the test document  $d$  is represented

$$P(c/d) = \frac{P(c) \prod_{i=1}^n P(w_i/c)^{f_i}}{P(d)}$$

where  $P(c)$  is the prior probability of a class  $c$ ,  $P(w_i/c)$  is the probability of word  $w_i$  occurring in a document  $d$  corresponding to class  $c$ ,  $P(d)$  is the likelihood of a document and  $f_i$  is the number of occurrences of a word  $w_i$  in a document  $d$ .

The prior probability of a class is given by

$$P(c) = \frac{N_c}{N}$$

where  $N_c$  is the number of documents corresponding to class  $c$  and  $N$  is the total number of documents.

The conditional probability  $P(w_i/c)$  of a word  $w_i$  occurring in a document  $d$  in a class  $c$  is given by

$$P(w_i/c) = \frac{N_{ci} + \alpha}{N_c + \alpha \cdot |V|}$$

where  $N_{ci}$  is the number of times  $w_i$  appearing in  $c$  and  $N_c$  is the total count of words in class  $c$  and  $|V|$  is the number of unique words in the vocabulary.

In order to avoid zero probabilities, parameter  $\alpha$  is set. If  $\alpha = 1$ , the smoothing applied is called Laplacian smoothing.

### Data Storage And Data Visualization

The sentiment of reviews are stored in the database. Database connectivity is established between Business Intelligence tool and the database. Data visualization is essential because information can be better understood through pictorial representation. It is the presentation of data in pictorial form such as graphs and charts (“Data Visualization”, n.d). Section 6.2 displays the various visualization plots obtained as a result of sentiment analysis.

### Performance Analysis

#### Classifier Evaluation

Table 1(a) Evaluation report for Linear Support Vector and Multinomial Naive Bayes

Linear Support Vector				Multinomial Naive Bayes			
Sentiment	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Sentiment	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Negative	0.87	0.85	0.86	Negative	0.82	0.75	0.79
Positive	0.84	0.75	0.79	Positive	0.84	0.89	0.86
Accuracy		88.59%		Accuracy		84.56%	



The most commonly used metrics to evaluate the classifiers are precision, recall, f1-score and accuracy. Before looking into details of these metrics, it is important to understand four terms namely: true positive, true negative, false positive and false negative. True positive is the number of reviews that are classified as positive and are really positive. True negative is the number of reviews that are classified as negative and are really negative. False positive is the number of reviews that are actually positive but are classified negative. False negative is the number of reviews that are negative but are classified positive.

### *Precision*

Precision is ratio of prediction made by classifier that are actually correct. The range of precision is between 0 and 1. Higher the value of precision better is the classification. Precision is given by the below formula.

$$P = \frac{tp}{tp + fp}$$

Where,  $tp$  is the number of true positive and  $fp$  is the number of false positive. From table 1(a) it can be inferred that precision for Linear Support Vector classification is 0.87 for negative sentiment and 0.84 for positive sentiment where as for Multinomial Naive Bayes classification it is 0.82 for negative sentiment and 0.84 for positive sentiment.

### *Recall*

Recall is a measure of sensitivity or true positive of the classified review against true positive and true negatives. The range of recall is between 0 and 1. Higher the value of recall better the classification. Recall is given by the below formula.

$$R = \frac{tp}{tp + fn}$$

Where,  $tp$  is the number of true positive and  $fn$  is the number of false negative. From table 1(a) it can be inferred that recall for Linear Support Vector classification is 0.85 for negative sentiment and 0.75 for positive sentiment where as for Multinomial Naive Bayes classification it is 0.75 for negative sentiment and 0.89 for positive sentiment.

### *F1-Score*

F1-score is a meld of precision and recall. Recall is given more importance while calculating the score. The range of f1-score is between 0 and 1. Higher the value of f1-score better is the classification. F1-score is given by the below formula.

$$F1 = \frac{2 * P * R}{P + R}$$

Where,  $P$  is the precision and  $R$  is the recall. From table 1(a) it can be inferred that f1-score for Linear Support Vector classification is 0.86 for negative sentiment and 0.79 for positive sentiment where as for Multinomial Naive Bayes classification it is 0.79 for negative sentiment and 0.86 for positive sentiment.

### Accuracy

Accuracy is defined as the percentage of correctly classified positive and negative reviews.

$$Accuracy = \frac{tp + tn}{tp + tn + fp + fn}$$

Where,  $tp$  denotes true positive,  $tn$  denotes true negative,  $fp$  denotes false positive and  $fn$  denotes false negative. From table 1(a) it can be inferred that the accuracy of Linear Support Vector is 88.59% and that of Multinomial Naive Bayes is 84.56%.

### Run Time Analysis

The classifiers were implemented in python and tested on laptop running an Intel(R) core(TM) i5-3210M CPU with frequency 2.50 GHz. The total memory used for training and classifying passenger reviews is 138.3 MB.

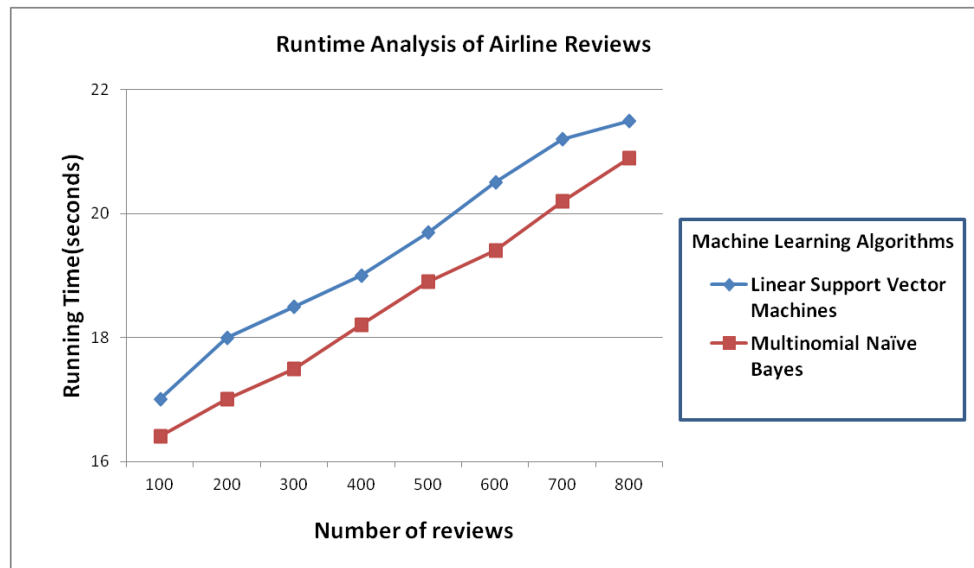


Figure 2(a) Runtime analysis of Sentiment Classification of Machine Learning Algorithms

From figure 2(a), we infer that Multinomial Naive Bayes is faster than Linear Support Vector Machines. Naive Bayes is computationally quicker while making decisions. Support

Vector Machines takes more time to build a decision surface and then perform sentiment classification.

## Experiments and Results

In this section, we discuss about the experiments and results of two machine learning approaches: Linear Support Vector classification and Multinomial Naive Bayes classification. This section is split into two parts: 1) Classifier accuracy and pre-processing strategy dependence and 2) Visualization of analyzed data.

### Classifier Accuracy And Pre-Processing Strategy Dependence

This section details about the correlation that exists between the accuracy, number of features and the different pre-processing techniques used. The results are summarized in table 2(a).

Table 2(a) *Variation in accuracy and number of features based on Pre-processing approach*

Approach	Number of Features	Linear Support Vector Accuracy	Multinomial Naive Bayes Accuracy
Without Pre-processing	10112	86.05%	83.17%
Normalization	12144	86.40%	84.21%
Normalization + Stop Words Removal	10056	86.75%	84.10%
Normalization + Stop Words Removal + Stemming	6553	87.55%	84.33%
Normalization + Stop Words Removal + Stemming + Lemmatization	6444	88.59%	84.56%

Table 2(a) clearly suggests that, as more number of pre-processing techniques is applied, there is an increasing degree of accuracy and reduction in the number of features. We infer that there is significant reduction in number of features when stop words removal and stemming are applied. Though there is marginal decline in number of features when lemmatization is applied, we observe a steep increase in Linear Support Vector accuracy by 1.04%. In Multinomial Naive Bayes, steep increase in accuracy by 1.04% was observed upon performing normalization. The overall increase in Linear Support Vector classification accuracy when compared to without pre-processing is 2.54% where as it is 1.39% in Multinomial Naive Bayes classification.

### Visualization of Analyzed Data

In this section, we display the graphical analysis of sentiment analysis as well as the ratings extracted from the forum.

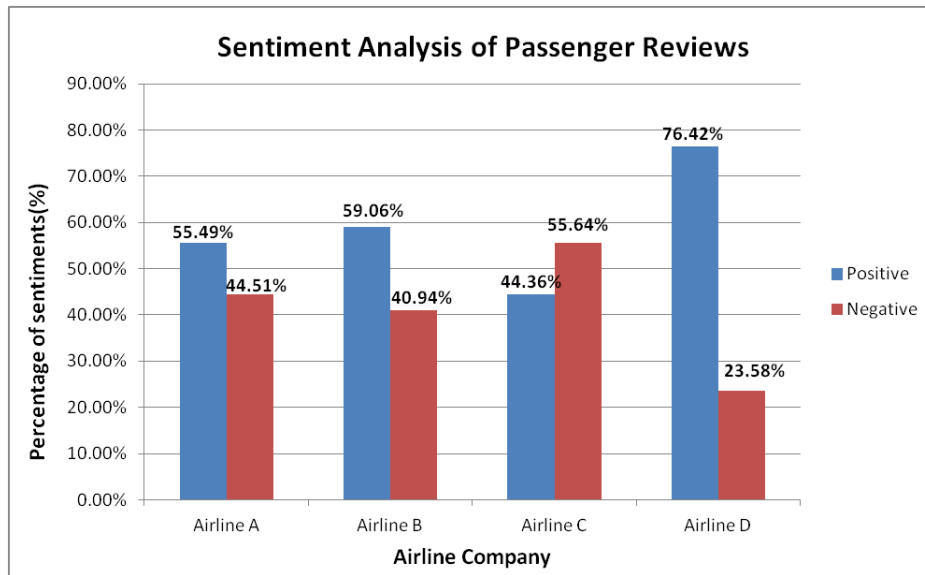


Figure 2(a) Sentiment Analysis of Passenger Reviews

Figure 2(a) delineates percentage of passengers whose reviews are classified positive/negative. We infer that Airline D has been received well among the passengers compared to other three airline companies. Airline C as seen from figure 2(a) has failed to meet their passengers expectation. Airline A and Airline B have received mixed reviews from passengers indicating that they should work on their services more.

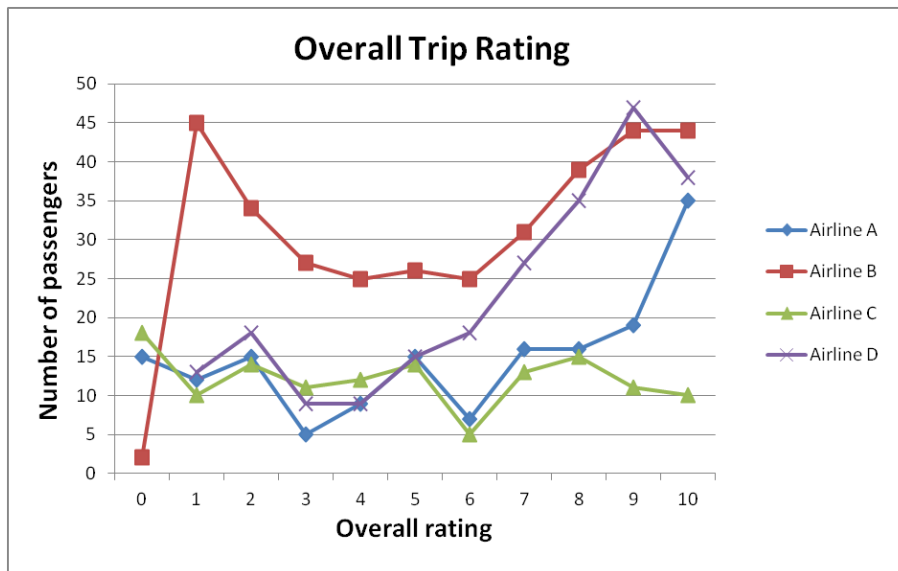


Figure 2(b) Overall trip rating

Figure 2(b) shows the overall trip rating rated by individual passenger on a scale of 10. Figure 2(a) and Figure 2(b) synchronize with each other. For example, figure 2(a) reveals that Airline C earned more negative reviews than positive reviews which is in correspondence with figure 2(b) that Airline C garnered poor ratings.

## Conclusion

In this work we have focussed on analyzing the sentiment of passenger reviews obtained from popular airline forum. Our work suggest that Linear Support Vector classification yields better accuracy than Multinomial Naive Bayes. But, when it comes to run time, Multinomial Naive Bayes classifies faster than Linear Support Vector. The number of features reduced by 36.27% on the application of different pre-processing techniques. It was also observed that classifier accuracy improved with the application of different pre-processing techniques. The graphical plot of the sentiment using business intelligence tool makes it easy to evaluate performance of an airline. The limitation of our work is that the system does not provide any information about overall scope of the sentiment. Also, the system requires training with manually classified reviews unlike traditional lexicon-based analysis system.

## Future Work

Subjective and objective sentence detection can be employed to remove opinion sentences from reviews which will make sentiment classification task easier. The data set can be increased and experiment can be repeated on different classification methods such as clustering. Pre-processing strategies like bigrams, trigrams, negation handling, feature selection, etc., can be used to improve classifier accuracy. Hybrid classifier system can be used to improve accuracy. Sentiment Topic Detection can be employed to determine the most talked about topic.

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