Analyzing the Focus of a HAN: The Importance of Enjambments When Classifying Post-Modern Poetry

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ABSTRACT:
Modern and post-modern free verse poems feature a large and complex variety in their poetic prosody that falls along a continuum from a more fluent to a more disfluent and choppy style. We investigate the free verse spectrum of modern and postmodern poetry and we have previously shown that we can classify poems along this continuum. In this paper, we investigate whether our model uses similar traits of a poem for classification as humans do, in particular: enjambments. We analyse whether the attention of the model coincides with the occurrence of enjambments and we find that it does not, although we can also show that the model is able to identify enjambments. This indicates that enjambment lines are as informative as other lines, unlike as hypothesized by literary study.

The Prosody of Free-verse Poetry
At least 80 per cent of modern and postmodern poems have no rhyme nor metrical schemes such as iambic or trochaic meter. Does this, however, mean that they lack any rhythmical features? In contrast, the opposite is true: modern poets like Whitman, the Imagists, the Beat poets, and contemporary Slam poets developed a post-metrical prosody which employs rhythmic features of everyday language, prose, and musical styles.

Data Sources/Material
We collaborate with lyrิกline.org, a website containing hundreds of hours of author-spoken poetry; the German sub-corpus contains 52 hours. The third author manually assigned a small subset of 175 poems to their rhythmical class as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German class</th>
<th>English class</th>
<th>f-measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>free verse</td>
<td>free verse</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unphased</td>
<td>unphased</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evoked</td>
<td>evoked</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjambment</td>
<td>enjambment</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investigating Enjambments
We can train an enjambment detector with high performance:
- good performance across most classes (avg. f-measure: .73)
- perfect identification of enjambment-dominated poems
- good performance differentiating enjambment-dominated styles (considering both text + audio as input)
- model attention not focused on enjambment lines

Adding enjambment feature during training and test only marginally improves performance of the classifier

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