Extracting Social Meaning from Language: The Computational Linguistics of Food and the Spread of Innovation

Automatic extracting social meaning from language is one of the most exciting challenges in natural language understanding. In this talk I’ll summarize a number of recent results using the tools of natural language processing to help extract and understand social meaning from texts of different sorts. We’ll explore the relationship between language, economics and social psychology in the automatic processing of the language of restaurant menus and reviews. And I’ll show how natural language processing can help model different aspects of the spread of innovation through communities: how interdisciplinarity plays a crucial role in the spread of scientific innovation, and how the spread of linguistic innovation is intricately tied up with people’s lifecycle in online communities.

Biography

Dan Jurafsky is Professor and Chair of Linguistics, and Professor of Computer Science, at Stanford University. He is the co-author of the widely-used textbook “Speech and Language Processing”, co-created one of the first massively open online courses, Stanford’s course in Natural Language Processing, and is the recipient of a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship. His most recent book, “The Language of Food”, came out in September. His research focuses on computational linguistics, and its application to the social and behavioral sciences.