Using Networks to Navigate a Corpus of Reader Reviews

An Explorative Study of Absorption Expressions in Different Genres

Tina Ternes | DH Lab University of Basel | tina.ternes@unibas.ch

**Research Questions**
- Do texts of different genres elicit a specific response in readers (or do readers with specific preferences seek out texts that incorporate these dimensions)?
- Are reviews of the same genre more similar than reviews of different genres?
- Can network analysis help in finding meaningful collections of reviews?

**Story World Absorption**
- Attention: Effortlessly achieved deep concentration
- Mental Imagery: Visual representations emerging in one’s mind while reading a story
- Emotional Engagement: Feelings shared with or directed towards the characters
- Transportation: Sensation of entering a story world
- Impact: (Longer-lasting) effects on the reader

**Categories per Community**

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<th>Cluster 01 – Science Fiction</th>
<th>Cluster 04 – Mystery</th>
<th>Cluster 11 – Romance 1</th>
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**Data**
- 199 reader reviews on 49 novels from Goodreads
- Genres: Fantasy, Romance, Horror/Thriller, Mystery, Science Fiction
- Part of the AbsORR corpus
- Manually annotated for statements of absorption

**Methods**
- Analysis of absorption distribution across genres
- Data cleaning: Exclusion of names and story-specific terms
- Semi automatic approach using NER and manual review
- Computation of text-similarity using TF-IDF and the cosine method
- Graph visualization and clustering using the louvain algorithm
- Selection of clusters for further analysis
- Analysis of absorption distribution across genres
- Qualitative analysis of the clusters using term-keyness, concordances, and close reading

**Results**
- Network Structure
  - Mystery, Science Fiction, and Horror/Thriller are more closely connected with each other than with Romance
  - Reviews of Mystery and Romance form more homogenous clusters
  - Fantasy seems to be a much broader category than the other genres
- Absorption
  - Deviating absorption patterns tend to show in separate clusters
  - Absorption statements frequently show inside the keywords of the clusters
- Qualitative Analysis
  - Science Fiction and Horror/Thriller reviews are clustered less by genre than by reader preference (atmosphere, characters, style, narration)
  - Romance reviews are written in a distinct affective style, seemingly following conventions (emphasis on emotional and bodily reactions, focus on characters, slang)
  - Mystery readers showcase an emphasis on active cognitive involvement

**Conclusion**
- Genre is not the main factor in forming clusters
- Deviations in absorption patterns seem to have an influence on review similarity
- Network analysis is a useful tool for the identification of underlying structures in reader review corpora