

## Corpus Linguistics, Resources and Normalisation

Sylvain Pogodalla  
sylvain.pogodalla@loria.fr  
Bureau : B. 242

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# Epistemological Aspects

- “The study of language based on examples of 'real life' language use” [McEnery and Wilson(1996)]
- Not only a *methodology*, but also a *theory*
- Not by itself a linguistic branch (unlike phonology, syntax or semantics), but *transversal* (in particular from the methodological point of view)

## Some History

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## About the use of corpora in linguistics

- Using a corpus, what is being analysed? A property of the grammar or a "social" phenomenon?
- *Competence* and *performance*. ▶ Example Theoretical *linguists* study competence.
- Corpora reflect performance. Hence, competence  $\Rightarrow$  no corpus
- Competence  $\Rightarrow$  Introspection

## Some exceptions

- The study of language learning by children (because requires meta-knowledge on the language)
- Languages that are not spoken anymore
- Phonetics
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Is it grammatically correct?

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- What is the nature of data in linguistics (experimental data)?
- What benefits from a corpus data?

*[The corpus linguist] He has all of the primary facts that he needs, in the form of a corpus of approximately one zillion running words, and he sees his job as that of deriving secondary facts from his primary facts. At the moment he is busy determining the relative frequencies of the eleven parts of speech as the first word of a sentence versus the second word of a sentence [Fillmore(1992)]*

- Nevertheless [Hill(1962)] about introspection

*Chomsky: The verb 'perform' cannot be used with mass word objects: one can 'perform a task' but one cannot 'perform labour'*

*Hatcher: How do you know, if you don't use a corpus and have not studied the verb 'perform'?*

*Chomsky': How do I know'? Because I am a native speaker of the English language*

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Intuition is sometimes useful:

- In a corpus : *il parle à* + proper name
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How is it possible to say that *il mange à Pierre* is ungrammatical?

There is no reason *a priori* that *parle* is different from *mange*.

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## Linguistics as data analysis

But also a little bit more:

*[purpose of linguists] is not simply to account for all utterances which comprise his corpus [but rather] to account for utterances which are not in his corpus at a given time [Hockett(1948)]*

*[introspective judgements] when it agrees [with corpus data non-corpus data is] superfluous; when it disagrees [with corpus data non-corpus data is] obnoxious [Hockett(1964)]*

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- About representativity (biased and incomplete), Cf frequencies
- Pseudo-procedure methodology [[Abercrombie\(1965\)](#)]: manual analyses and mistakes

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## But intrinsic advantages

### When introspection fails

- Phonology
- Acquisition
- Languages variation (regional expressions, sociolects, register)
- Data can be observed and checked
- Usefulness of the frequency measure (unavailable from introspection)

### Even when introspection can happen

- Failing to find some sentences or grammatical constructions in a corpus may also be an interesting comment on their frequency
- Introspection lacks systematicity (mistakes can also occur during introspection)
- "Corpus is a more powerful methodology from the point of view of the scientific method" [Leech(1992)]

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### Mixing the two approaches

- Corpus of introspection examples (Cf Partee, famous examples, etc.).
- “What look like the cute examples and arbitrary infatuations of linguists often, though not always, represent a distillation of important and wide-ranging issues” (Martin Kay 2006) vs “[the non-corpus linguist] sits in a deep soft armchair, with his eyes closed and his hands clasped behind his head. Once in a while he opens his eyes, sits up abruptly shouting, ‘Wow, what a neat fact!’, grab his pencil, and writes something down... having come still no closer to knowing what language is really like.” [Fillmore(1992)]

### Benefits

- Evidence of usefulness of quantitative data: in the success of building efficient tools (taggers)
- Today, NLP applications?

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## Characteristics of a corpus

### Which Prerequisites to Work with a Corpus?

#### Escaping from the pseudo-procedure criticism

- Data are *exploitable* by computers
- Data are reliable (at least with a measurable reliability)
  - OK for some automatic annotations (POS tagging)
  - Still pseudo-procedure for other non-annotated corpora (NP recognition)
- Enable searching, sorting, computing. . .

#### Some examples

Frequency, **Concordancer**



## Characteristics of a corpus

### Which Prerequisites to Work with a Corpus?

#### Escaping from the pseudo-procedure criticism

- Data are *exploitable* by computers
- Data are reliable (at least with a measurable reliability)
  - OK for some automatic annotations (POS tagging)
  - Still pseudo-procedure for other non-annotated corpora (NP recognition)
- Enable searching, sorting, computing. . .

#### Some examples

Frequency, **Concordancer**

# Characteristics of a corpus

Designed for a usage

- [McEnery and Wilson(1996)]

*If you think the language is finite, then your interpretation of the findings in a corpus may reflect that - if we can change the interpretation of the findings in a corpus to match the verities Chomsky revealed, then the natural data provided by the corpus can be a rich and powerful tool for the linguist. But we must understand what we are doing when we are looking in a corpus and building one. (...) A corpus and an introspection-based approach to linguistic are not mutually exclusive. In a very real sense they can be gainfully viewed as being complementary.*

- Difference between linguistic goals and NLP goals (in particular, as NLP tool user, on non introspective data)

# What is a Corpus

## As for now

- Data readable from computer
- But also:
  - Sampling and representativity
  - Finite size
  - Reference to a standard

# Necessity of Sampling

- **Infinite language** (except for dead languages, texts from a single author...). Hence scarcely a finite set  $\Rightarrow$  sampling
- **Sampling and representativity** Cf. Chomsky criticism
- **Aim** to get the greatest representativity inside a variety under study

## What does it mean?

- What are the *genres* of texts, the *number* of texts, what particular texts, how to select some abstracts, of what size.
- "Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population" [Biber(1993)]

## Consequence

Hence, a corpus has to be evaluated on its ability to include:

- The possible genres of texts of a language
- The linguistic variety inside a language

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## Representativity: an example

Despite genres are not defined on a linguistic basis, there are big linguistic differences between genres

Example: Brown corpus

- Classification
- Modalities example (`modal-ratio.py`),
- Token/type ratio example (`token-type-ratio.py`)

A corpus has to ensure, or at least to justify, representativity.

## Size of a Corpus

- Some corpus always increases (new data are added). It gives an idea of the evolution
- But, because of the changing size, sampling and representativity are more difficult to ensure.
- Examples: NLTK Corpora:
  - brown corpus (1 000 000 words)
  - treebank 10% of the WSJ section of the Penn Treebank (1 000 000 words)

# Machine-Readable Corpus

## Summary

**Advantages:** querying and computing

**Examples:** raw text pattern matching (grep)

## Consequences

- But what about all the flexed forms? (→ **concordancer example** )
- What about all the Ns? (→ Brown corpus example (POS tagging))
- What about all the NPs ? (→ treebank example)

⇒ Crucial role of *annotation*

## Other Examples

French Corpora

# Annotations

What we already know:

- Raw text → regexp, concordancer
- Unstructured annotations (glues with the word)
- Annotations and trees
- Other (semantics, time and aspects, pragmatics, etc.)

Annotations are increasingly complex to read and to create

# Principles

## Aims of annotations:

- 1 Enhancing (raw) data with relevant linguistic annotations (relevant with what respect? Depends on the usage)
- 2 Reusability: annotation cost (time, money), correction and accuracy. But:
  - Juridical problems (text ownership)
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Hence some rules [Leech(1993)] :

- 1 From an annotated corpus, it should always be possible to come back to initial data (example BC). Remark: may be difficult after normalisation (“l’arbre” → “le arbre”, etc.)
- 2 Annotations should be extractable from the text in order to save them at another place (DB), to present them in another way, etc.
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- 4 Mention should be made of the annotator and the way annotation was made (manual/automatic annotation, number of annotators, manually corrected/uncorrected. . . )
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- Everything which is potentially interesting!
- Hence, depends on the application

## Non linguistic annotation

- Genre, variety (french from France, from North, from South, age and sex of the speaker, publication date, etc.)
- Form. Example:  

```
1. I'm a student, I'm a student (female, 1994)  
2. I'm a student (female)  
3. I'm a student, student, student at the same time, etc.
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## Various informations:

- Lemmatisation (example: **concordancer** ), cf talana/lemonde corpus
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- Semantics:
  - Specific meaning of a word (among all its possible meanings) in a text, senseval/wordnet example. (Application: disambiguation, translation, etc.)
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- Lemmatisation (example: **concordancer** ), cf talana/lemonde corpus
- Parsing. Usually, a constituent tree. But, again:
  - Differences between tagsets, differences between structures (trees or chunks), cf example and **Penn Tree Bank annotation guide**
  - Differences between formalisms (dependency grammars (trees, but unordered leaves), or graphs, not trees (Word grammars [**Hudson(1990)**])). cf **DGA** example (**data** ,**visualization**)
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  - Specific meaning of a word (among all its possible meanings) in a text, senseval/wordnet example. (Application: disambiguation, translation, etc.)
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# Obstacles and Difficulties

## Technical difficulties

- Character encoding
- Tokenisation
- Orthography

## The annotation process

- Accurate annotation (manual) → time, cost
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  - Specifying these informations
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[Lupovici(1993)]:

- 1 Descending process by vertical division
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Descending process:

Organised with divisions by large fields, subdivided by topics, subdivided by working groups. . .

As for classification. Difficult for rapidly evolving domains.

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### ISO TC37 (Technical committee): Terminology and other language resources

- **SC3** (Sub-committee): Computer applications in terminology
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## Example: lexical resources

### The MLF model

- Core model (p. 15)
- Extensions:
  - Extensional morphological lexicon (p. 21)
  - Intensional morphological lexicon (pp. 55–58)
  - Syntactic lexicon (p. 33)
  - Semantics lexicon (p. 39)



# Example: semantic annotation

## Time and events

### SemAF: Semantic annotation framework — Part 1: Time and events

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### Chronological aspects

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# Architectural choices

- Choice of SGML, XML, ISO 646 (ASCII), Unicode
- A large number of pre-defined annotations
- Distinction between required practices, recommended practices and optional practices
- Encoding for various points of view on the text
- Provide ways for users to extend basic schemas

*This mandate is fulfilled by the explicit specification, in the reference section for each tag, that the tag is required, mandatory when applicable but otherwise omissible, recommended generally, recommended when applicable but not always applicable, or optional.*

*However, the TEI Guidelines make (with relatively rare exceptions) no suggestions or restrictions as to the relative importance of textual features. The philosophy of the Guidelines is 'if you want to encode this feature, do it this way'— but very few features are mandatory.*

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## Example of recommendations

From **TEI P5. Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange**

- Almost always present elements (paragraphs, punctuation, citations, dates, lists, etc.)
- Description of the encoded document (TEI Header) (description of the file—title, author. . . —, of the encoding, if the profile—register. . .)
- Structure of the text. . . (TEI + TEIheader + text, example monde98), divisions (chapter, cf Alice)



## Syntactic function and semantic roles

The Proposition Treebank [Palmer et al.(2005)Palmer, Gildea, and Kingsbury]

### Predicate-argument information/semantic roles

The same semantic role can be taken by different syntactic arguments

#### Example (Syntactic argument vs semantic argument)

- John broke the window
- The window broke

#### Note:

- Does not rely on an active/passive voice distinction
- Does not rely on transitive/intransitive distinction

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- Get data on the actual frequency of syntactic variations
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### Example (What is expected?)

- ... [Arg0 the company] to ... *offer* [Arg1 a 15% to a 20% stake] [Arg2 to the public]
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### What is needed: the possible roles for a verb

#### Example (FrameSet kick.D1 "drive or impel with the foot")

Arg0: Kicker

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Ex1: But [Arg0 two big New York banks,] seem [Arg0 \*trace\*<sub>i</sub>]  
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  - Examples (decline , break , call )
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## The semantic annotation is linked to the syntactic one

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- When there is an Arg0, then it is a subject (96.9%), another verbal argument (2.4%) or an object (0.2%)
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### Automatic semantic labelling: Comparison with FrameNet

	FrameNet	PropBank	PropBank (>10 ex)
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Gold-standard parses			74.3	66.4	76.0	69.9
Gold-standard parses w/ traces			80.6	71.6	82.0	74.7

Accuracy for unknown boundaries

## Comparison using shallow parses

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## Q&A Systems

Q What is the **current** unemployment rate?

A Depends on the day (month) the question was asked

Q When did the Berlin Wall fall?

A Thursday

East German border workers began dismantling the Berlin Wall at the  
border, Brandenburger gate on Thursday night to make a symbol of unity.

## Formal semantics

### Relation between time events and tensed clauses

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- Annotation scheme and tools: TimeML

## Conceptual and linguistics basis

Event expressions: introduced by tensed verbs, stative adjectives (on board, stalled), event nominals (World Championship, election)

Dependencies between events and time: anchoring (on Monday), ordering (yesterday), embedding (John said Mary left)

Anchoring example: *John taught on Monday*

$$\exists e_1. \text{teach}(e_1, j) \wedge \text{on}(e_1, \text{Monday}) \wedge \text{Past}(e_1)$$

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- Durations (four weeks)



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# The TimeML language

Markup Language for Temporal and Event Expressions

## TimeML: a specification language for events and temporal expressions in natural language

- Time stamping of events (identifying an event and anchoring it in time)
- Ordering events with respect to one another (lexical versus discourse properties of ordering). `tlink` tag.
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- a `TLINK` to relate events and times, to order events relative to each other and to order times relative to each other.
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Markup Language for Temporal and Event Expressions

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## TimeML example[Pratt-Hartmann(2007)]

*After his talk with Mary, John drove to Boston. During the drive he ate a donut.*

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 During the drive <EVENT eid=eatJd he ate a donut /EVENT> <MAKEINST eid=eatJd eiid= $l_3$ /> <TLINK eventInst= $l_3$  relatedToEventInst=  $l_2$  relType=DURING/>.

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- 300 texts of media sources from the news domain
- Annotation:
  - an automatic pre-processing step
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- statistics:

	Count	Frequency
Words	68555	100%
Tags (events, timex3, signal)	11206	16.3%
Events	7571	11.0%
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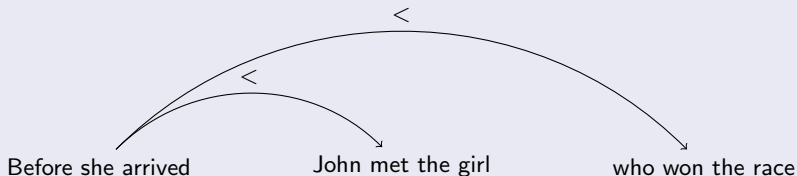
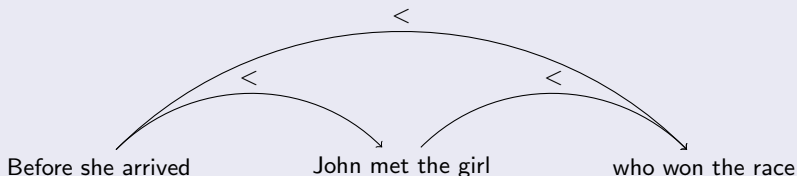
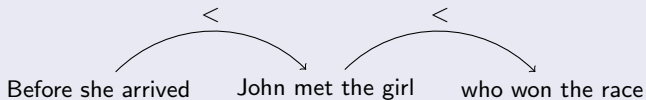
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# Questions on the semantics of the annotation

Inference properties

## Comparing annotation



## Questions on the semantics of the annotation

### About quantification

*During each of John's drive to Boston he ate a donut.*

*John drove to Boston. During his drive he did not eat a donut.*

### Expressivity and decidability

- Is it possible to make inference?

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# Annotating a corpus with discourse relations

The Penn Discourse TreeBank example

## Motivations

- To annotate the WSJ corpus in the Penn TreeBank (1 million words) with discourse relations
- To have discourse relations independent from any theory

## Example

Even though critical, it was just the kind of attention they were seeking. So they fired back at the Goldman Sachs objections in their own economics letter, "The BMC report".

## Objectives

- Gives a layer of discourse structure
- Enables the comparison of discourse annotation with syntactic annotation in order to highlight relationship between syntactic structure and discourse structure
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### Example (Discourse connective as subordinate conjunction)

John eats porridge for breakfast, **while** Mary eats muesli.

### Example (DC as adverbial)

Eat your porridge. **Otherwise** you're not going to football practice.

### Example (DC as PP)

You've eaten your porridge every day this week. **As a result**, you can go to football practice.



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### Example

**Buyers can look forward to a double-digit annual returns if they are right.** **But they will have disappointing returns or even losses if interest rates rise instead.**

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# Design choices

## Choice of the corpus

- The same Penn WSJ as the Penn TreeBank  $\Rightarrow$  three levels of annotation of the same data (syntactic, semantic and discourse)
- Raw text annotation (not XML) because sometimes discourse args do not align with syntactic structures

## Annotation process

- Through the whole corpus, one connective at a time. Allow annotators to “immediately exploit the experience they were gaining in annotating a connective”
- Ten lists of possible discourse connectives
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# About annotation

## Form of the annotation

- Span list (words)

### Example

But, says Mr. Dinkins, he did get an office. So he shouldn't complain.

### Example

On the one hand, Mr. Giuliani wants to cut into Mr. Dinkin's credibility. On the other, he seeks to convince voters he's the new Fiorello LaGuardia—affable, good-natured and ready to lead New-York out of the mess it's in.

- Automatically computed Gorn address list ([browse an example](#) )
- Possible sup(plementary)-arguments.

# About annotation

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- Span list (words)

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But, says Mr. Dinkins, he did get an office. So he shouldn't complain.

### Example

On the one hand, Mr. Giuliani wants to cut into Mr. Dinkin's credibility. On the other, he seeks to convince voters he's the new Fiorello LaGuardia—affable, good-natured and ready to lead New-York out of the mess it's in.

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## Inter-annotator agreement

- 4 annotators, then 2
- 10 explicit connectives (2717 tokens)
- Exact match agreement: 90.2%
- Partial agreement (arg overlapping): 94.5%

Example (Parenthetical in the middle of an argument)

Bankers said warrants for Hong Kong stocks are attractive because they give foreign investors, wary of volatility in the colony's stock market, an opportunity to buy shares without taking too great a risk.

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## Implicit connectives

Relations with no discourse connective

### Example (Implicit because)

“We like to make our own judgements” about Mr. Morishita, says C. D. People have a different reputation country by country.

- Exact match: 72%
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# Statistics for Corpus Linguistics

- Introduction
- Representativity
- Hypthesis Testing

# Introduction

## Some terminology

# Central Tendency Measures

Role: To give the “typical” value of the grouped data

## Which measure?

- Mean:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \text{ or } \bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n f(x_i)x_i}{n}$$

with  $f$  frequency distribution.

- Median: let us assume  $x_{i-1} \leq x_i$ . Then

$$M = \begin{cases} x_{\frac{n+1}{2}} & \text{if } n \text{ is odd} \\ \frac{x_{\frac{n}{2}} + x_{\frac{n}{2}+1}}{2} & \text{if } n \text{ is even} \end{cases} \text{ or } x_{i_2} \text{ s.t. } \sum_1^{i_2-1} f(x_i) < \frac{n}{2} \text{ and } \sum_1^{i_2} f(x_i) \geq \frac{n}{2}$$

- Mode: value with the highest frequency



# Central Tendency Measure

	Mean	Median	Mode
Ratio variable	•	•	•
Interval variables	•	•	•
Ordinal variables	—	•	•
Nominal variables	—	—	•

Do they give the right tendency?

Extreme values

Skewed distribution

Symmetric distribution  $\Rightarrow$  mode = median = mean

# Central Measure Tendancy

## Measuring Variability

- Range:  $w = \max_i(x_i) - \min_i(x_i)$
- Interquartile range:
  - $x_{i_1}$  s.t.  $\sum_1^{i_1-1} f(x_i) < \frac{n}{2}$  and  $\sum_1^{i_1} f(x_i) \geq \frac{n}{4}$
  - $x_{i_2}$  s.t.  $\sum_1^{i_2-1} f(x_i) < \frac{n}{2}$  and  $\sum_1^{i_2} f(x_i) \geq \frac{2n}{4}$
  - $x_{i_3}$  s.t.  $\sum_1^{i_3-1} f(x_i) < \frac{n}{2}$  and  $\sum_1^{i_3} f(x_i) \geq \frac{3n}{4}$
$$w_{1,3} = x_{i_3} - x_{i_1}$$
- Variance:  $\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum_1^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n}$
- Standard deviation:  $\sigma$

# The Laplace-Gauss Distribution

A.k.a The normal distribution


$$LG(\mu, \sigma) : f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{x-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2}$$

Tables


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